

Greek Mythology - 2

Heroes and Creatures

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Heroes

Greek hero cult

Hero cults were one of the most distinctive features of ancient Greek religion. In Homeric Greek, "hero" (*heroes*, ἥρωες) refers to a man who was fighting on either side during the Trojan War. By the historical period, however, the word came to mean specifically a *dead* man, venerated and propitiated at his tomb or at a designated shrine, because his fame during life or unusual manner of death gave him power to support and protect the living. A hero was more than human but less than a god, and various kinds of supernatural figures came to be assimilated to the class of heroes; the distinction between a hero and a god was less than certain, especially in the case of Heracles, the most prominent, but a typical hero.^[1]

The grand ruins and tumuli remaining from the Bronze Age gave the pre-literate Greeks of the 10th and 9th centuries BC a sense of a grand and vanished age that was reflected in the oral epic tradition, which would be crystallized in the *Iliad*. Copious renewed offerings begin to be represented, after a hiatus, at sites like Lefkandi,^[2] even though the names of the grandly buried dead were hardly remembered. "Stories began to be told to individuate the persons who were now believed to be buried in these old and imposing sites," observes Robin Lane Fox.^[3]



Ruins of a hero-shrine or heroon at Sagalassos, Turkey

Nature of hero cult

Greek hero-cults were distinct from the clan-based ancestor worship from which they developed,^[4] in that as the *polis* evolved, they became a civic rather than familial affair, and in many cases none of the worshipers traced their descent back to the hero any longer: no shrine to a hero can be traced unbroken from Mycenaean times. Whereas the ancestor was purely local, Lewis Farnell observed, the hero might be tended in more than one locality, and he deduced that hero-cult was more deeply influenced from the epic tradition, that "suggested many a name to forgotten graves",^[5] and provided even Dorians a connection to Mycenaean heroes, according to J.N. Coldstream.^[6] "Coldstream believed the currency of epic would account for votives in Dorian areas, where an alien, immigrant population might otherwise be expected to show no particular reverence for Mycenaean predecessors".^[7] Large Mycenaean tholos tombs that betokened a grander past, were often the site of hero-cults. Not all heroes were even known by names.

Aside from the epic tradition, which featured the heroes alive and in action rather than as objects of *cultus*,^[8] the earliest written reference to hero-cult is attributed to Dracon, the Athenian lawgiver of the late seventh century BC, who prescribed that gods and local heroes should both be honoured according to ancestral custom. The custom, then, was already established, and the multiplicity of local heroes.^[9] The written sources emphasise the importance of heroes' tombs and the *temenos* or sanctuary, where chthonic rites appeased their spirits and induced them to continue to favour the people who looked to them as founders, of whom founding myths were related. In the hero's restricted and local scope he "retained the limited and partisan interests of his mortal life. He would help those who lived in the vicinity of his tomb or who belonged to the tribe of which he himself was the founder," observes Robert Parker,^[10] with the reservation that Heracles, with his pan-Hellenic scope was again the exception.



Cult of Oedipus on a Lucanian amphora, ca. 380-70 BC
(Louvre, CA 308)

James Whitley interpreted the final stage, in which hero-cult was co-opted by the city-state as a political gesture, in the archaic aristocratic tumulus surrounded by stelae, erected by Athens to the cremated citizen-heroes of Marathon (490 BC), to whom chthonic cult was dedicated, as the offering trenches indicate.^[11] On the other hand Greek heroes were distinct from the Roman cult of dead emperors, because the hero was not thought of as having ascended to Olympus or become a god: he was beneath the earth, and his power purely local. For this reason hero cults were chthonic in nature, and their rituals more closely resembled those for Hecate and Persephone than those for Zeus and Apollo: libations in the dark hours, sacrifices that were not shared by the living.

The two exceptions to the above were Heracles and Asclepius, who might be honored as either heroes or gods, with chthonic libation or with burnt sacrifice. Heroes in cult behaved very differently from heroes in myth. They might appear indifferently as men or as snakes, and they seldom appeared unless angered. A Pythagorean saying advises not to eat food that has fallen on the floor, because "it belongs to the heroes". Heroes if ignored or left unappeased could turn malicious: in a fragmentary play by Aristophanes, a chorus of anonymous heroes describe themselves as senders of lice, fever and boils.

Some of the earliest (eighth century BC) hero (and heroine) cults well attested by archaeological evidence in mainland Greece include shrines in Laconia to Helen and Menelaus (the *Menelaion* at Therapne near Sparta) and one to Agamemnon together with Cassandra at Mycenae, or Alexandra at Amyklai, perhaps a shrine to Odysseus in Polis Bay, Ithaca.^[12] Little is known of the cult of Erechtheus on the Acropolis, Athens.^[13] The cult of Pelops at Olympia dates from the Archaic period.

Heroes and heroines

Hero cults were offered most prominently to men, though in practice the experience of the votary was of propitiating a cluster of family figures, which included women, the wife of a hero-husband, mother of a hero-son (Alcmene and Semele), daughter of a hero-father.^[14] As Moses I. Finley observed of the world of Odysseus, which he reads as a nostalgic eighth-century rendering of traditions from the culture of Dark Age Greece,

Penelope became a moral heroine for later generations, the embodiment of goodness and chastity, to be contrasted with the faithless, murdering Clytaemnestra, Agamemnon's wife; but 'hero' has no feminine gender in the age of heroes.^[15]

Where local cult venerated figures such as the sacrificial virgin Iphigeneia, an archaic local *nymphe* has been reduced to a mortal figure of legend. Other isolated female figures represented priestess-initiators of a local cult.

Iconographic and epigraphal evidence marshalled by Jennifer Lynn Larson combine to depict heroines as similar in kind to heroes, but in androcentric Greek culture,^[16] typically of lesser stature.

Types of hero cult

James Whitley^[17] distinguished four, perhaps five, essential types of hero cult:

Oikist cults of founders.^[18] Such cults arose in colonies in the Hellenic world in Magna Graecia and Sicily at the grave of the founder, the *oikos*. In the case of cults at the tombs of the recently heroised, it must be assumed that the identity of the occupant of the tomb was unequivocally known. Thucydides (V.11.1) gives the example of Brasidas at Amphipolis. Battus of Cyrene might also be mentioned. "Such historical examples," Whitley warns, "have clearly colored the interpretation of certain tomb cults in the Archaic period." Such Archaic sites as the "*heroon*" at Lefkandi and that close to the West Gate at Eretria cannot be distinguished by archaeological methods from family observances at tombs (tomb cults) and the cult of ancestors.



Offerings to a deified hero and another deity, depicted on a Greek marble relief ca. 300 BC

Cults to named heroes. A number of cult sites known in Classical times were dedicated to known heroes in the Greek and modern senses, especially of the *Iliad* and other episodes of the Epic Cycle. Whitley makes two points here, first that the earliest *heria* associate the male hero with earlier and stronger *female* presences, and second, that figures such as Odysseus, Agamemnon and Menelaus all have strong *local* connections. The cults of Oedipus at Athens and Pelops at Olympia.

Cults to local heroes. Such local figures do not figure among the Panhellenic figures of epic. Examples would be Akademos and Erechtheus at Athens.

Cults at Bronze Age tombs. These are represented archaeologically by Iron Age deposits in Mycenaean tombs, not easily interpreted. Because of the gap in time between the Bronze Age collapse and the earliest votive objects, continuity appears to be broken. A sherd from above the Grave Circle at Mycenae is simply inscribed "to the hero",^[19] and Whitley suggests that the unnamed race of the Silver Age might have been invoked. In Attica, such cults are those associated with tholos tombs at Thorikos and Menidhi.

Oracular hero cults. Whitley does not address this group of local cults where an oracle developed, as in the case of Amphiaraus, who was swallowed up by a gaping crack in the earth. Minor cults accrued to some figures who died violent or unusual deaths, as in the case of the dead from the Battle of Marathon, and those struck by lightning, as in several attested cases in Magna Graecia.

Heroes, politics, and gods

Hero cults could be of the utmost political importance. When Cleisthenes divided the Athenians into new demes for voting, he consulted Delphi on what heroes he should name each division after. According to Herodotus, the Spartans attributed their conquest of Arcadia to their theft of the bones of Orestes from the Arcadian town of Tegea. Heroes in myth often had close but conflicted relationships with the gods. Thus Heracles's name means "the glory of Hera", even though he was tormented all his life by the queen of the gods. This was even truer in their cult appearances. Perhaps the most striking example is the Athenian king Erechtheus, whom Poseidon killed for choosing Athena over him as the city's patron god. When the Athenians worshiped Erechtheus on the Acropolis, they invoked

him as *Poseidon Erechtheus*.

List of heroes

Greek deities series	
Primordial deities	
Titans and Olympian deities	
Aquatic deities	
Personified concepts	
Other deities	
Chthonic deities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demeter• Erinyes• Gaia• Hades• Hecate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Iacchus• Melinoe• Persephone• Triptolemus• Trophonius

- Achilles at Leuce
- Aeneas
- Ajax
- Akademos
- Alexander the Great at Alexandria
- Amphiaraus
- Atalanta
- Asclepius
- Battus at Cyrene
- Erechtheus at Athens
- Hector
- Heracles
- Homer, venerated at Alexandria by Ptolemy IV Philopator
- Jason
- Leonidas
- Odysseus
- Oedipus at Athens
- Orion at Boeotia
- Orpheus
- Penthesilea
- Pelops at Olympia
- Perseus
- Philippus of Croton
- Theseus
- Tantalus
- Paris

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- Gregory Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry*, 1979.
- Erwin Rohde, *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks*, 1925
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- Jennifer Larson, *Ancient Greek Cults: A Guide* (2007). Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-32448-9
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- D. Boehringer, *Heroenkulte in Griechenland von der geometrischen bis zur klassischen Zeit: Attika, Argolis, Messenien* (2001)
- G. Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults* (2002)
- B. Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes* (2005)

Notes

- [1] Robert Parker, in John Boardman, Jasper Griffin and Oswyn Murray, eds. *Greece and the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 1988) "Greek religion" p. 288; Parker gives a concise and clear synopsis of *hero*.
- [2] Carla Maria Antonaccio, *An Archaeology of Ancestors: Tomb Cult and Hero Cult in Early Greece* (1995) and "Lefkandi and Homer", in O. Anderson and M. Dickie, *Homer's World: Fiction, Tradition and Reality* (1995); I. Morris, "Tomb cult and the Greek Renaissance" *Antiquity* **62** (1988:750-61).
- [3] Fox, *Travelling Heroes in the Epic Age of Homer*, 2008:34.
- [4] "The cult of Heroes everywhere has the same features as the cult of ancestors... the remains of a true cult of ancestors provided the model and were the real starting-point for the later belief and cult of Heroes." Rohde 1925:125.
- [5] Farnell 1921:283f.
- [6] Coldstream, "Hero cults in the age of Homer", *Journal of the Hellenic Society* **96** (1976:8-17).
- [7] Antonaccio 1994:395.
- [8] R. K. Hack, "Homer and the cult of heroes", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* **60** (1929::57-74).
- [9] Carla M. Antonaccio, "Contesting the Past: Hero Cult, Tomb Cult, and Epic in Early Greece" *American Journal of Archaeology* **98.3** (July 1994:389-410).
- [10] Parker 1988:250.
- [11] Inscriptions reveal that offerings were still being made to the heroised dead in the first century BC; the tumulus is discussed in Whitley, "The Monuments that stood before Marathon: Tomb cult and hero cult in Archaic Attica" *American Journal of Archaeology* **98.2** (April 1994:213-230).
- [12] Based on a single *graffito* from the Hellenistic period.
- [13] Antonaccio 1994:398f, note 50, gives bibliographies of the archaeological findings.
- [14] Jennifer Lynn Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults* (University of Wisconsin Press) 1995, has marshalled the evidences.
- [15] Finley, *The World of Odysseus* (1954; rev. ed. 1978), p.32f.
- [16] "Heroine cults fit well into our modern view of ancient Greek culture as firmly androcentric, though not as androcentric as some would have had us believe" (Larson 1995:144.
- [17] Whitley 1994:220ff.
- [18] A general study of *oikist* cults is I. Malkin, *Religion and Colonization in Ancient Greece* (Leiden) 1987:189-266.
- [19] Heinrich Schliemann, *Mycenae*, adduced by Whitley 1994:222 and note 44

Heracles

A marble statue of Heracles (Hercules) standing, holding a club over his shoulder, with a lion's head at his feet. The statue is a Roman copy of a Greek original by Lysippos, known as the Hercules Farnese. It depicts Heracles in a powerful, muscular physique, wearing a lion's head at his feet, symbolizing his victory over the Nemean Lion. The statue is displayed in a museum setting.

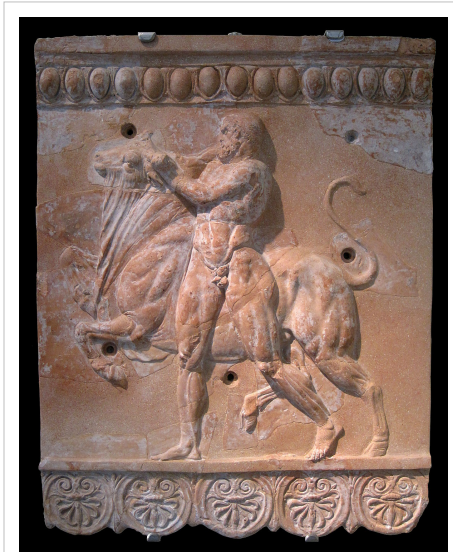
Heracles (♂ /ˈhɛərəkliːz/ ***HERR**-ə-kleez*; Ancient Greek: Ἡρακλῆς, *Hēraklēs*, from *Hēra*, "Hera", and *kleos*, "glory"^[1]), born **Alcaeus**^[2] (Ἀλκαῖος, *Alkaios*) or **Alcides**^[3] (Ἀλκείδης, *Alkeidēs*), was a divine hero in Greek mythology, the son of Zeus and Alcmene, foster son of Amphitryon^[4] and great-grandson (and half-brother) of Perseus. He was the greatest of the Greek heroes, a paragon of masculinity, the ancestor of royal clans who claimed to be Heracleidae (Ἡρακλειδαῖ) and a champion of the Olympian order against chthonic monsters. In Rome and the modern West, he is known as ***Hercules***, with whom the later Roman Emperors, in particular Commodus and Maximian, often identified themselves. The Romans adopted the Greek version of his life and works essentially unchanged, but added anecdotal detail of their own, some of it linking the hero with the geography of the Central Mediterranean. Details of his cult were adapted to Rome as well.

Extraordinary strength, courage, ingenuity, and sexual prowess with both males and females were among his characteristic attributes. Although he was not as clever as the likes of Odysseus or Nestor, Heracles used his wits on several occasions when his strength did not suffice, such as when laboring for the king Augeas of Elis, wrestling the giant Antaeus, or tricking Atlas into taking the sky back onto his shoulders. Together with Hermes he was the patron and protector of gymnasia and palaestrae.^[5] His iconographic attributes are the lion skin and the club. These qualities did not prevent him from being regarded as a playful figure who used games to relax from his labors and played a great deal with children.^[6] By conquering dangerous archaic forces he is said to have "made the world safe for mankind" and to be its benefactor.^[7] Heracles was an extremely passionate and emotional individual, capable of doing both great deeds for his friends (such as wrestling with Thanatos on behalf of Prince Admetus, who had regaled Heracles with his hospitality, or restoring his friend Tyndareus to the throne of Sparta after he was overthrown) and being a terrible enemy who would wreak horrible vengeance on those who crossed him, as Augeas, Neleus and Laomedon all found out to their cost.

Origin and character

Many popular stories were told of his life, the most famous being The Twelve Labours of Heracles; Alexandrian poets of the Hellenistic age drew his mythology into a high poetic and tragic atmosphere.^[8] His figure, which initially drew on Near Eastern motifs such as the lion-fight, was known everywhere: his Etruscan equivalent was **Hercle**, a son of Tinia and Uni.

Heracles was the greatest of Hellenic chthonic heroes, but unlike other Greek heroes, no tomb was identified as his. Heracles was both hero and god, as Pindar says *heroes theos*; at the same festival sacrifice was made to him, first as a hero, with a chthonic libation, and then as a god, upon an altar: thus he embodies the closest Greek approach to a "demi-god".^[8] The core of the story of Heracles has been identified by Walter Burkert as originating in Neolithic hunter culture and traditions of shamanistic crossings into the netherworld.^[9]



Heracles capturing the Cretan bull.

Hero or god

Heracles' role as a culture hero, whose death could be a subject of mythic telling (see below), was accepted into the Olympian Pantheon during Classical times. This created an awkwardness in the encounter with Odysseus in the episode of *Odyssey* XI, called the Nekuia, where Odysseus encounters Heracles in Hades:

*And next I caught a glimpse of powerful Heracles—
His ghost I mean: the man himself delights
in the grand feasts of the deathless gods on high...
Around him cries of the dead rang out like cries of birds
scattering left and right in horror as on he came like night...*"^[10]



The Origin of the Milky Way by Jacopo Tintoretto

Ancient critics were aware of the problem of the aside that interrupts the vivid and complete description, in which Heracles recognizes Odysseus and hails him, and modern critics find very good reasons for denying that the verses beginning, in Fagles' translation *His ghost I mean...* were part of the original composition: "once people knew of Heracles' admission to Olympus, they would not tolerate his presence in the underworld", remarks Friedrich Solmsen,^[11] noting that the interpolated verses represent a compromise between conflicting representations of Heracles.

It is also said that when Heracles died he shed his mortal skin, which went down to the underworld and he went up to join the gods for being the greatest hero ever known.

Christian Chronology

In Christian circles a Euhemerist reading of the widespread Heracles cult was attributed to a historical figure who had been offered cult status after his death. Thus Eusebius, *Preparation of the Gospel* (10.12), reported that Clement could offer historical dates for Hercules as a king in Argos: "from the reign of Hercules in Argos to the deification of Hercules himself and of Asclepius there are comprised thirty-eight years, according to Apollodorus the chronicler: and from that point to the deification of Castor and Pollux fifty-three years: and somewhere about this time was the capture of Troy."

Readers with a literalist bent, following Clement's reasoning, have asserted from this remark that, since Heracles ruled over Tiryns in Argos at the same time that Eurystheus ruled over Mycenae, and since at about this time Linus was Heracles' teacher, one can conclude, based on Jerome's date—in his universal history, his *Chronicon*—given to Linus' notoriety in teaching Heracles in 1264 BC, that Heracles' death and deification occurred 38 years later, in approximately 1226 BC.

Cult

The ancient Greeks celebrated the festival of the *Heracleia*, which commemorated the death of Heracles, on the second day of the month of Metageitnion (which would fall in late July or early August). What is believed to be an Egyptian Temple of Heracles in the Bahariya Oasis dates to 21 BC.

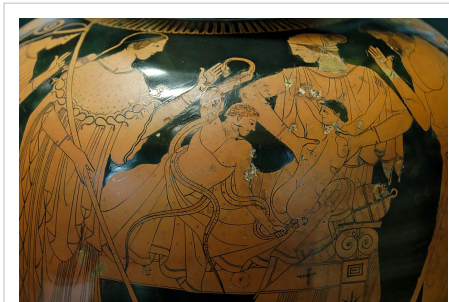


Temple to Heracles in Agrigento

Greek mythology

Birth and childhood

A major factor in the well-known tragedies surrounding Heracles is the hatred that the goddess Hera, wife of Zeus, had for him. A full account of Heracles must render it clear why Heracles was so tormented by Hera, when there were many illegitimate offspring sired by Zeus. Heracles was the son of the affair Zeus had with the mortal woman Alcmene. Zeus made love to her after disguising himself as her husband, Amphitryon, home early from war (Amphitryon did return later the same night, and Alcmene became pregnant with his son at the same time, a case of heteropaternal superfecundation, where a woman carries twins sired by different fathers).^[12] Thus, Heracles' very existence proved at least one of Zeus' many illicit affairs, and Hera often conspired against Zeus' mortal offspring as revenge for her husband's infidelities. His twin mortal brother, son of Amphitryon, was Iphicles, father of Heracles' charioteer Iolaus.

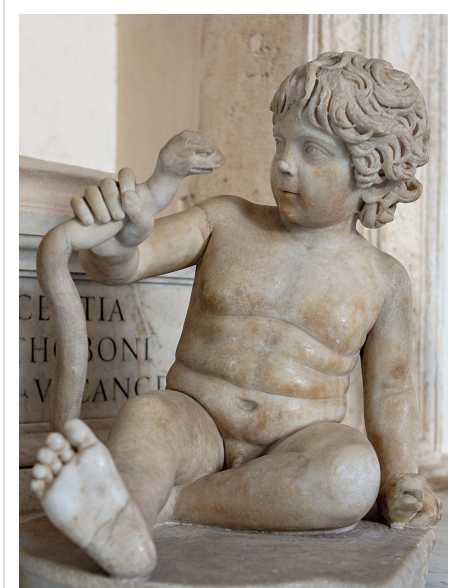


Heracles strangling snakes (detail from an Attic red-figured stamnos, ca. 480–470 BCE)

On the night the twins Heracles and Iphicles were to be born, Hera, knowing of her husband Zeus' adultery, persuaded Zeus to swear an oath that the child born that night to a member of the House of Perseus would become High King. Hera did this knowing that while Heracles was to be born a descendant of Perseus, so too was Eurystheus. Once the oath was sworn, Hera hurried to Alcmene's dwelling and slowed the birth of the twins Heracles and Iphicles by forcing Ilithyia, goddess of childbirth, to sit crosslegged with her clothing tied in knots, thereby causing the twins to be trapped in the womb. Meanwhile, Hera caused Eurystheus to be born prematurely, making him High King in place of Heracles. She would have permanently delayed Heracles' birth had she not been fooled by Galanthis, Alcmene's servant, who lied to Ilithyia, saying that Alcmene had already delivered the baby. Upon hearing this, she jumped in surprise, loosing the knots and inadvertently allowing Alcmene to give birth to Heracles and Iphicles.

Fear of Hera's revenge led Alcmene to expose the infant Heracles, but he was taken up and brought to Hera by his half-sister Athena, who played an important role as protectress of heroes. Hera did not recognize Heracles and nursed him out of pity. Heracles suckled so strongly that he caused Hera pain, and she pushed him away. Her milk sprayed across the heavens and there formed the Milky Way. But with divine milk, Heracles had acquired supernatural powers. Athena brought the infant back to his mother, and he was subsequently raised by his parents.

The child was originally given the name Alcides by his parents; it was only later that he became known as Heracles.^[4] He was renamed Heracles in an unsuccessful attempt to mollify Hera. He and his twin were just eight months old when Hera sent two giant snakes into the children's chamber. Iphicles cried from fear, but his brother grabbed a snake in each hand and strangled them. He was found by his nurse playing with them on his cot as if they were toys. Astonished, Amphytrion sent for the seer Tiresias, who prophesied an unusual future for the boy, saying he would vanquish numerous monsters.



Heracles as a boy strangling a snake (marble, Roman artwork, 2nd century CE)

Youth

After killing his music tutor Linus with a lyre, he was sent to tend cattle on a mountain by his foster father Amphytrion. Here, according to an allegorical parable, "The Choice of Heracles", invented by the sophist Prodicus (c. 400 BC) and reported in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* 2.1.21-34, he was visited by two nymphs—Pleasure and Virtue—who offered him a choice between a pleasant and easy life or a severe but glorious life: he chose the latter. This was part of a pattern of "ethicizing" Heracles over the fifth century BC.^[13]

Later in Thebes, Heracles married King Creon's daughter, Megara. In a fit of madness, induced by Hera, Heracles killed his children by Megara. After his madness had been cured with hellebore by Antikyreus, the founder of Antikyra,^[14] he realized what he had done and fled to the Oracle of Delphi. Unbeknownst to him, the Oracle was guided by Hera. He was directed to serve King Eurystheus for ten years and perform any task Eurystheus required of him. Eurystheus decided to give Heracles ten labours, but after completing them, Heracles was cheated by Eurystheus when he added two more, resulting in the Twelve Labors of Heracles.

Labours of Heracles

Driven mad by Hera, Heracles slew his own children. To expiate the crime, Heracles was required to carry out ten labors set by his archenemy, Eurystheus, who had become king in Heracles' place. If he succeeded, he would be purified of his sin and, as myth says, he would be granted immortality. Heracles accomplished these tasks, but Eurystheus did not accept the cleansing of the Augean stables because Heracles was going to accept pay for the labor. Neither did he accept the killing of the Lernaean Hydra as Heracles' nephew, Iolaus, had helped him burn the stumps of the heads. Eurystheus set two more tasks (fetching the Golden Apples of Hesperides and capturing Cerberus), which Heracles performed successfully, bringing the total number of tasks up to twelve.

Not all writers gave the labors in the same order. The *Bibliotheca* (2.5.1-2.5.12) gives the following order:

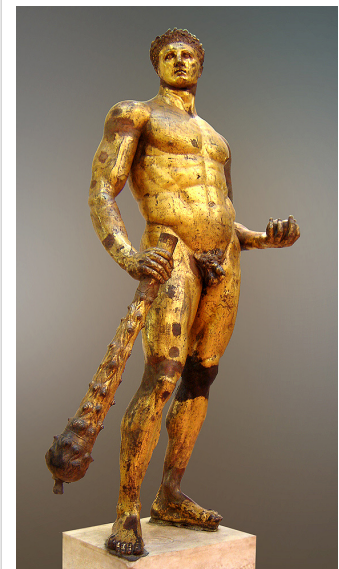
1. Slay the Nemean Lion.
2. Slay the nine-headed Lernaean Hydra.
3. Capture the Golden Hind of Artemis.
4. Capture the Erymanthian Boar.
5. Clean the Augean stables in a single day.
6. Slay the Stymphalian Birds.
7. Capture the Cretan Bull.
8. Steal the Mares of Diomedes.
9. Obtain the girdle of Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons.
10. Obtain the cattle of the monster Geryon.
11. Steal the apples of the Hesperides (He had the help of Atlas to pick them after Hercules had slain Ladon).
12. Capture and bring back Cerberus.

Further adventures

After completing these tasks, Heracles joined the Argonauts in a search for the Golden Fleece. They rescued heroines, conquered Troy, and helped the gods fight against the Gigantes. He also fell in love with Princess Iole of Oechalia. King Eurystus of Oechalia promised his daughter, Iole, to whoever could beat his sons in an archery contest. Heracles won but Eurystus abandoned his promise. Heracles' advances were spurned by the king and his sons, except for one: Iole's brother Iphitus. Heracles killed the king and his sons—excluding Iphitus—and abducted Iole. Iphitus became Heracles' best friend. However, once again, Hera drove Heracles mad and he threw Iphitus over the city wall to his death. Once again, Heracles purified himself through three years of servitude — this time to Queen Omphale of Lydia.



The fight of Heracles and the Nemean lion is one of his most famous feats. (Side B from an black-figure Attic amphora, ca. 540 BCE)



His 11th feat was to capture the apple of Hesperides (Gilded bronze, Roman artwork, 2nd century CE)



Hercules and the Nemean lion, Gandhara, India, 1st century.

Omphale

Omphale was a queen or princess of Lydia. As penalty for a murder, imposed by Xenoclea, the Delphic Oracle, Heracles was to serve as her slave for a year. He was forced to do women's work and to wear women's clothes, while she wore the skin of the Nemean Lion and carried his olive-wood club. After some time, Omphale freed Heracles and married him. Some sources mention a son born to them who is variously named. It was at that time that the cercoptes, mischievous wood spirits, stole Heracles' weapons. He punished them by tying them to a stick with their faces pointing downward.

Hylas

While walking through the wilderness, Heracles was set upon by the Dryopes. In Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica* it is recalled that Heracles had mercilessly slain their king, Theiodamas, over one of the latter's bulls, and made war upon the Dryopes "because they gave no heed to justice in their lives".^[15] After the death of their king, the Dryopes gave in and offered him Prince Hylas. He took the youth on as his weapons bearer and beloved. Years later, Heracles and Hylas joined the crew of the *Argo*. As Argonauts, they only participated in part of the journey. In Mysia, Hylas was kidnapped by the nymphs of a local spring. Heracles, heartbroken, searched for a long time but Hylas had fallen in love with the nymphs and never showed up again. In other versions, he simply drowned. Either way, the *Argo* set sail without them.

Rescue of Prometheus

Hesiod's *Theogony* and Aeschylus' *Prometheus Unbound* both tell that Heracles shot and killed the eagle that tortured Prometheus (which was his punishment by Zeus for stealing fire from the gods and giving it to mortals). Heracles freed the Titan from his chains and his torments. Prometheus then made predictions regarding further deeds of Heracles.

Heracles' Constellation

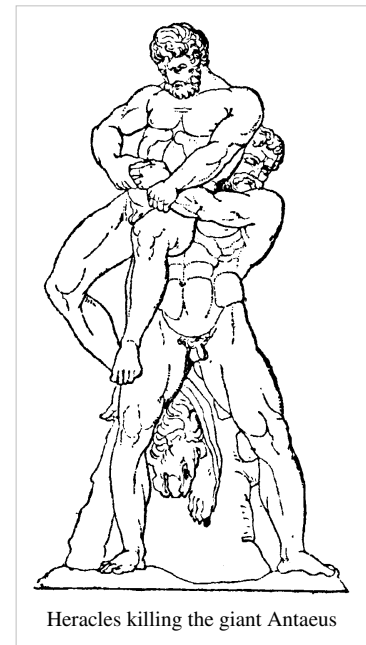
On his way back to Mycenae from Iberia, having obtained the Cattle of Geryon as his tenth labour, Heracles came to Liguria in North-Western Italy where he engaged into battle with two giants, Albion and Bergion or Dercynus, sons of Poseidon. The opponents were strong; Hercules was in a difficult position so he prayed to his father Zeus for help. Under the aegis of Zeus, Heracles won the battle. It was this kneeling position of Heracles when prayed to his father Zeus that gave the name Engonasin (*"Εγγόνασιν"*, derived from *"εν γόνασιν"*), meaning "on his knees" or "the Kneeler" one constellation known as Heracles' constellation. The story, among others, is described by Dionysius of Halicarnassus.^[16]

Laomedon of Troy

Before the Trojan War, Poseidon sent a sea monster to attack Troy. The story is related in several digressions in the *Iliad* (7.451-453, 20.145-148, 21.442-457) and is found in Apollodorus' *Bibliothēke* (2.5.9). Laomedon planned on sacrificing his daughter Hesione to Poseidon in the hope of appeasing him. Heracles happened to arrive (along with Telamon and Oicles) and agreed to kill the monster if Laomedon would give him the horses received from Zeus as compensation for Zeus' kidnapping Ganymede. Laomedon agreed. Heracles killed the monster, but Laomedon went back on his word. Accordingly, in a later expedition, Heracles and his followers attacked Troy and sacked it. Then they slew all Laomedon's sons present there save Podarces, who was renamed Priam, who saved his own life by giving Heracles a golden veil Hesione had made. Telamon took Hesione as a war prize; they were married and had a son, Teucer.

Other adventures

- Heracles defeated the Bebryces (ruled by King Mygdon) and gave their land to Prince Lycus of Mysia, son of Dascylus.
- He killed the robber Termerus.
- Heracles visited Evander with Antor, who then stayed in Italy.
- Heracles killed King Amyntor of the Dolopes for not allowing him into his kingdom. He also killed King Emathion of Arabia.
- Heracles killed Lityerses after beating him in a contest of harvesting.
- Heracles killed Periclymenus at Pylos.
- Heracles killed Syleus for forcing strangers to hoe a vineyard.
- Heracles rivaled with Lepreus and eventually killed him.
- Heracles founded the city Tarentum (modern Taranto in Italy).
- Heracles learned music from Linus (and Eumolpus), but killed him after Linus corrected his mistakes. He learned how to wrestle from Autolycus. He killed the famous boxer Eryx of Sicily in a match.
- Heracles was an Argonaut. He killed Alastor and his brothers.
- When Hippocoon overthrew his brother, Tyndareus, as King of Sparta, Heracles reinstated the rightful ruler and killed Hippocoon and his sons.
- Heracles slew the giants Cynus, Porphyrius and Mimas. The expedition against Cynus, in which Iolaus accompanied Heracles, is the ostensible theme of a short epic attributed to Hesiod, *Shield of Heracles*.
- Heracles killed Antaeus the giant who was immortal while touching the earth, by picking him up and holding him in the air while strangling him.
- Heracles went to war with Augeias after he denied him a promised reward for clearing his stables. Augeias remained undefeated due to the skill of his two generals, the Molionides, and after Heracles fell ill, his army was badly beaten. Later, however, he was able to ambush and kill the Molionides, and thus march into Elis, sack it, and kill Augeias and his sons.
- Heracles visited the house of Admetus on the day Admetus' wife, Alcestis, had agreed to die in his place. By hiding beside the grave of Alcestis, Heracles was able to surprise Death when he came to collect her, and by squeezing him tight until he relented, was able to persuade Death to return Alcestis to her husband.
- Heracles challenged wine god Dionysus to a drinking contest and lost, resulting in his joining the Thiasus for a period.
- Heracles also appears in Aristophanes' *The Frogs*, in which Dionysus seeks out the hero to find a way to the underworld. Heracles is greatly amused by Dionysus' appearance and jokingly offers several ways to commit suicide before finally offering his knowledge of how to get to there.
- Heracles appears as the ancestral hero of Scythia in Herodotus' text. While Heracles is sleeping out in the wilderness, a half-woman, half-snake creature steals his horses. Heracles eventually finds the creature, but she refuses to return the horses until he has sex with her. After doing so, he takes back his horses, but before leaving, he hands over his belt and bow, and gives instructions as to which of their children should found a new nation in Scythia.



Lovers

Women

Marriages

During the course of his life, Heracles married four times. His first marriage was to Megara, whose children he murdered in a fit of madness. Apollodoros (*Bibliothēke*) recounts that Megara was unharmed and given in marriage to Iolaus, while in Euripides' version Heracles killed Megara, too.

His second wife was Omphale, the Lydian queen or princess to whom he was delivered as a slave.

His third marriage was to Deianira, for whom he had to fight the river god Achelous (upon Achelous' death, Heracles removed one of his horns and gave it to some nymphs who turned it into the cornucopia.) Soon after they wed, Heracles and Deianira had to cross a river, and a centaur named Nessus offered to help Deianira across but then attempted to rape her. Enraged, Heracles shot the centaur from the opposite shore with a poisoned arrow (tipped with the Lernaean Hydra's blood) and killed him. As he lay dying, Nessus plotted revenge, told Deianira to gather up his blood and spilled semen and, if she ever wanted to prevent Heracles from having affairs with other women, she should apply them to his vestments. Nessus knew that his blood had become tainted by the poisonous blood of the Hydra, and would burn through the skin of anyone it touched.

Later, when Deianira suspected that Heracles was fond of Iole, she soaked a shirt of his in the mixture, creating the poisoned shirt of Nessus. Heracles' servant, Lichas, brought him the shirt and he put it on. Instantly he was in agony, the cloth burning into him. As he tried to remove it, the flesh ripped from his bones. Heracles chose a voluntary death, asking that a pyre be built for him to end his suffering. After death, the gods transformed him into an immortal, or alternatively, the fire burned away the mortal part of the demigod, so that only the god remained. After his mortal parts had been incinerated, he could become a full god and join his father and the other Olympians on Mount Olympus. He then married Hebe, his fourth and last wife.

Affairs

Another episode of his female affairs that stands out was his stay at the palace of Thespius king of Thespieae, who wished him to kill the Lion of Cithaeron. As a reward, the king offered him the chance to make love to his daughters, all fifty of them, in one night. Heracles complied and they all became pregnant and all bore sons. This is sometimes referred to as his Thirteenth Labour. Many of the kings of ancient Greece traced their lines to one or another of these, notably the kings of Sparta and Macedon.

Yet another episode of his female affairs that stands out was when he carried away the oxen of Geryones, he also visited the country of the Scythians. Once while he was asleep there, his horses suddenly disappeared, and when he woke and wandered about in search of them, he came into the country of Hylaea. He there found the monster Echidna in a cave. When he asked whether she knew anything about his horses, she answered, that they were in her own possession, but that she would not give them up, unless he would consent to stay with her for a time. Heracles accepted the request, and became by her the father of Agathyrus, Gelonus, and Scythes. The last of them became king of the Scythians, according to his father's arrangement, because he was the only one among the three brothers



The *topos* of Heracles suckling at Hera's breast was especially popular in Magna Graecia, here on a mid-4th century Apulian painted vase; Etruscan mythology adopted this iconic image

that was able to manage the bow which Heracles had left behind, and to use his father's girdle.^[17]

Men

As symbol of masculinity and warriorship, Heracles also had a number of male lovers. Plutarch, in his *Eroticos*, maintains that Heracles' male lovers were beyond counting. Of these, the one most closely linked to Heracles is the Theban Iolaus. According to a myth thought to be of ancient origins, Iolaus was Heracles' charioteer and squire. Heracles in the end helped Iolaus find a wife. Plutarch reports that down to his own time, male couples would go to Iolaus's tomb in Thebes to swear an oath of loyalty to the hero and to each other.^{[18][19]}

One of Heracles' male lovers, and one represented in ancient as well as modern art, is Hylas. Though it is of more recent vintage (dated to the 3rd century) than that with Iolaus, it had themes of mentoring in the ways of a warrior and help finding a wife in the end. However it should be noted that there is nothing whatever in Apollonius's account that suggests that Hylas was a sexual lover as opposed to a companion and servant.^[20]

Another reputed male lover of Heracles is Elacatas, who was honored in Sparta with a sanctuary and yearly games, Elacatea. The myth of their love is an ancient one.^[21]

Abdera's eponymous hero, Abderus, was another of Heracles' lovers. He was said to have been entrusted with—and slain by—the carnivorous mares of Thracian Diomedes. Heracles founded the city of Abdera in Thrace in his memory, where he was honored with athletic games.^[22]

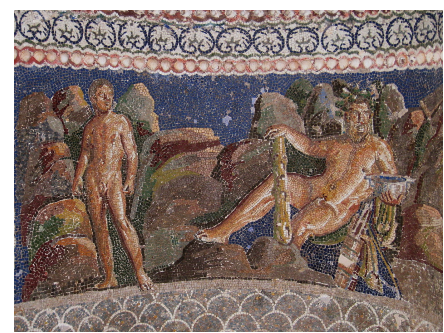
Another myth is that of Iphitus.^[23]

Another story is the one of his love for Nireus, who was "the most beautiful man who came beneath Ilion" (*Iliad*, 673). But Ptolemy adds that certain authors made Nireus out to be a son of Heracles.^[24]

Pausanias makes mention of Sostratus, a youth of Dyme, Achaea, as a lover of Heracles. Sostratus was said to have died young and to have been buried by Heracles outside the city. The tomb was still there in historical times, and the inhabitants of Dyme honored Sostratus as a hero.^[25] The youth seems to have also been referred to as Polystratus.

There is also a series of lovers who are either later inventions or purely literary conceits. Among these are Admetus, who assisted in the hunt for the Calydonian Boar;^[26] Adonis;^[27] Corythus;^[27] and Nestor, who was said to have been loved for his wisdom. His role as lover was perhaps to explain why he was the only son of Neleus to be spared by the hero.^[28]

A scholiast on *Argonautica* lists the following male lovers of Heracles: "Hylas, Philoctetes, Diomus, Perithoas, and Phrix, after whom a city in Libya was named".^[29] Diomus is also mentioned by Stephanus of Byzantium as the eponym of the deme Diomeia of the Attic phyle Aegeis: Heracles is said to have fallen in love with Diomus when he was received as guest by Diomus' father Collytus.^[30] Perithoas and Phrix are otherwise unknown, and so is the version that suggests a sexual relationship between Heracles and Philoctetes.



Heracles and Iolaus (Fountain mosaic from the Anzio Nymphaeum)

Children

All of Heracles' marriages and almost all of his heterosexual affairs resulted in births of a number of sons and at least four daughters. One of the most prominent is Hyllus, the son of Heracles and Deianeira or Melite. The term *Heracleidae*, although it could refer to all of Heracles' children and further descendants, is most commonly used to indicate the descendants of Hyllus, in the context of their lasting struggle for return to Peloponnesus, out of where Hyllus and his brothers - the children of Heracles by Deianeira - were thought to have been expelled by Eurystheus.

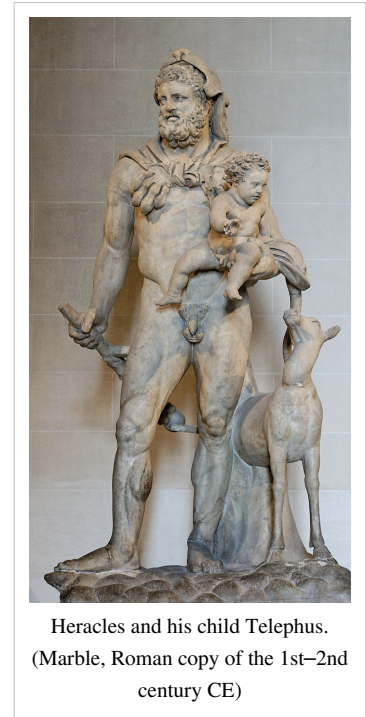
The children of Heracles by Megara are collectively well known because of their ill fate, but there is some disagreement among sources as to their number and individual names. Apollodorus lists three, Therimachus, Creontiades and Deicoon;^[31] to these Hyginus^[32] adds Ophitus and, probably by mistake, Archelaus, who is otherwise known to have belonged to the Heracleidae, but to have lived several generations later. A scholiast on Pindar's odes provides a list of seven completely different names: Anicetus, Chersibius, Mecistophonus, Menebrontes, Patrocles, Polydorus, Toxocleitus.^[33]

The divine sons of Heracles and Hebe are Alexiades and Anicetus.

Other well-known children of Heracles include Telephus, king of Mysia (by Auge), and Tlepolemus, one of the Greek commanders in the Trojan War (by Astyoche).

There is also, in some versions, reference to an episode where Heracles met and impregnated a half-serpentine woman, known as Echidna; her children, known as the Dracontidae, were the ancestors of the House of Cadmus.

According to Herodotus, a line of 22 Kings of Lydia descended from Hercules and Omphale. The line was called Tylonids after his Lydian name.



Heracles and his child Telephus.
(Marble, Roman copy of the 1st–2nd century CE)

Children and consorts

1. Megara
 1. Therimachus
 2. Creontiades
 3. Ophitus
 4. Deicoon
2. Omphale
 1. Agelaus
 2. Tyrsenus
3. Deianira
 1. Hyllus
 2. Ctesippus
 3. Glenus
 4. Oneites
 5. Macaria
4. Hebe
 1. Alexiades
 2. Anicetus
5. Astydameia, daughter of Ormenius

1. Ctesippus
 6. Astyoche, daughter of Phylas
 1. Tlepolemus
 7. Auge
 1. Telephus
 8. Autonoe, daughter of Pireus / Iphinoe, daughter of Antaeus
 1. Palaemon
 9. Baletia, daughter of Baletus
 1. Brettus^[34]
 10. Barge
 1. Bargasus^[35]
 11. Bolbe
 1. Olynthus
 12. Celtine
 1. Celtus
 13. Chalciope
 1. Thessalus
 14. Chania, nymph
 1. Gelon^[36]
 15. Echidna
 1. Agathysus
 2. Gelonus
 3. Skythes
 16. Epicaste
 1. Thestalus
 17. Lavinia, daughter of Evander^[37]
 1. Pallas
 18. Malis, a slave of Omphale
 1. Acelus^[38]
 19. Meda
 1. Antiochus
 20. Melite (heroine)
 21. Melite (naiad)
 1. Hyllus (possibly)
 22. Myrto
 1. Eucleia
 23. Palantho of Hyperborea^[39]
 1. Latinus^[37]
 24. Parthenope, daughter of Stymphalus
 1. Everes
 25. Phialo
 1. Aechmagoras
 26. Psophis
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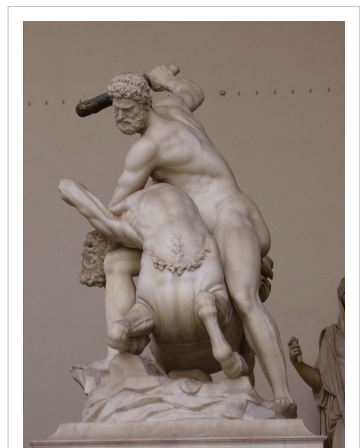
1. Echephron
2. Promachus
27. Pyrene
 1. none known
28. Rhea, Italian priestess
 1. Aventinus^[40]
29. Thebe (daughter of Adramys)
30. Tinge, wife of Antaeus
 1. Sophax^[41]
31. 50 daughters of Thespius
 1. 50 sons, see Thespius#Daughters and grandchildren
32. Unnamed Celtic woman
 1. Galates^[42]
33. Unnamed slave of Omphale
 1. Alcaeus / Cleodaeus
34. Unnamed daughter of Syleus (Xenodoce?)^[43]
35. Unknown consorts
 1. Agylleus^[44]
 2. Amathous^[45]
 3. Azon^[46]
 4. Chromis^[47]
 5. Cymus^[48]
 6. Dexamenus^[49]
 7. Leucites^[50]
 8. Manto
 9. Pandaie
 10. Phaestus *or* Rhopalus^[51]

Death

This is described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book IX. Having wrestled and defeated Achelous, god of the Achelous river, Heracles takes Deianira as his wife. Travelling to Tiryns, a centaur, Nessus, offers to help Deianira across a fast flowing river while Heracles swims it. However, Nessus is true to the archetype of the mischievous centaur and tries to steal Deianira away while Heracles is still in the water. Angry, Heracles shoots him with his arrows dipped in the poisonous blood of the Lernaean Hydra. Thinking of revenge, Nessus gives Deianira his blood-soaked tunic before he dies, telling her it will "excite the love of her husband".^[52]

Several years later, rumor tells Deianira that she has a rival for the love of Heracles. Deianira, remembering Nessus' words, gives Heracles the bloodstained shirt. Lichas, the herald, delivers the shirt to Heracles. However, it is still covered in the Hydra's blood from Heracles' arrows, and this poisons him, tearing his skin and exposing his bones. Before he dies, Heracles throws Lichas into the sea,

thinking he was the one who poisoned him (according to several versions, Lichas turns to stone, becoming a rock standing in the sea, named for him). Heracles then uproots several trees and builds a funeral pyre, which Poëas,



Hercules killing Centaur Nessus
(marble by Giambologna, Florence)

father of Philoctetes, lights. As his body burns, only his immortal side is left. Through Zeus' apotheosis, Heracles rises to Olympus as he dies.

No one but Heracles' friend Philoctetes (Poeas in some versions) would light his funeral pyre (in an alternate version, it is Iolaus who lights the pyre). For this action, Philoctetes or Poeas received Heracles' bow and arrows, which were later needed by the Greeks to defeat Troy in the Trojan War. Philoctetes confronted Paris and shot a poisoned arrow at him. The Hydra poison would subsequently lead to the death of Paris. The Trojan War, however, would continue until the Trojan Horse was used to defeat Troy.

One remarkable commentary of Herodotus^[53] on Heracles is that he lived 900 years before himself (c. 1300 BCE).

Heracles in Rome

In Rome, Heracles was honored as *Hercules*, and had a number of distinctively Roman myths and practices associated with him under that name.

Heracles in other cultures

Via the Greco-Buddhist culture, Heracleian symbolism was transmitted to the far east. An example remains to this day in the Nio guardian deities in front of Japanese Buddhist temples. Herodotus connected Heracles both to Phoenician god Melqart and to the Egyptian god Shu. Temples dedicated to Heracles abounded all along the Mediterranean coastal countries. For example the temple of *Heracles Monoikos* (i.e. the lone dweller), built far from any nearby town upon a promontory in what is now the Côte d'Azur, gave its name to the area's more recent name, Monaco.

The gateway to the Mediterranean Sea from the Atlantic Ocean, where the southernmost tip of Spain and the northernmost of Morocco face each other, is, classically speaking, referred to as the Pillars of Hercules/Heracles, owing to the story that he set up two massive spires of stone to stabilise the area and ensure the safety of ships sailing between the two landmasses.

Spoken word myths

Bibliography of reconstruction: Homer, *Odyssey*, 12.072 (7th c. BC); Theocritus, *Idylls*, 13 (350–310 BC); Callimachus, *Aetia (Causes)*, 24. Thiodamas the Dryopian, *Fragments*, 160. Hymn to Artemis (310–250? BC); Apollonios Rhodios, *Argonautika*, I. 1175 - 1280 (c. 250 BC); *Bibliotheca* 1.9.19, 2.7.7 (140 BC); Sextus Propertius, *Elegies*, i.20.17ff (50–15 BC); Ovid, *Ibis*, 488 (AD 8–18); Gaius Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, I.110, III.535, 560, IV.1-57 (1st century); Hyginus, *Fables*, 14. Argonauts Assembled (1st century); Philostratus the Elder, *Images*, ii.24 Thiodamas (170–245); First Vatican Mythographer, 49. Hercules et Hylas

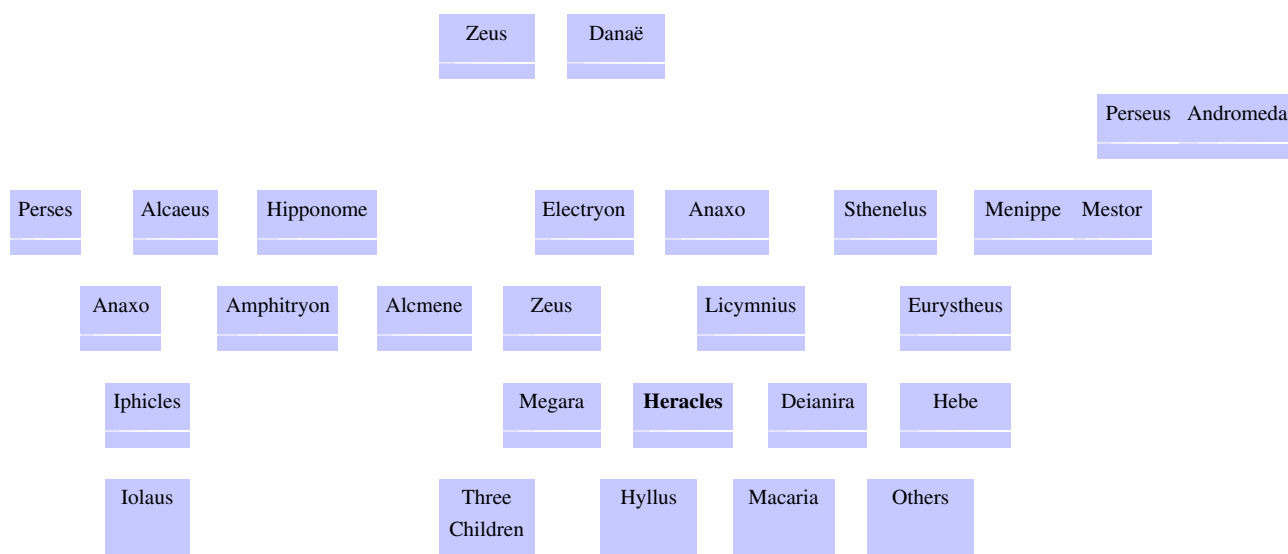


Hellenistic-era depiction of the Zoroastrian divinity Bahram as Hercules carved in 153 B.C. at Kermanshah, Iran.



The protector Vajrapani of the Buddha is another incarnation of Heracles (Gandhara, 1st century CE)

Ancestry^[54]



Notes

- [1] Becking, Bob, *et al.*. *Dictionary of deities and demons*. ed. Toorn, Karel van der. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. 1999
- [2] Schmitz, Leonhard (1867). "Alceides" (<http://www.ancientlibrary.com/smith-bio/0107.html>). In William Smith. *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*. 1. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. pp. 98. .
- [3] *Bibliotheca* ii. 4. § 12
- [4] . By his adoptive descent through Ampitryon, Heracles receives the epithet **Alcides**, as "of the line of Alcaeus", father of Amphitryon. Amphitryon's own, mortal son was Iphicles.
- [5] Pausanias, *Guide to Greece*, 4.32.1
- [6] Aelian, *Varia Historia*, 12.15
- [7] Aelian, *Varia Historia*, 5.3
- [8] Burkert 1985, pp. 208-9
- [9] Burkert 1985, pp. 208-212.
- [10] Robert Fagles' translation, 1996:269.
- [11] Solmsen, Friedrich (1981). "The Sacrifice of Agamemnon's Daughter in Hesiod's 'Ehōeae'". *The American Journal of Philology* **102** (4): 353–358 [p. 355]. JSTOR 294322.
- [12] Compare the two pairs of twins born to Leda and the "double" parentage of Theseus.
- [13] Andrew Ford, *Aristotle as Poet*, Oxford, 2011, p. 208 n. 5, citing, in addition to Prodicus/Xenophon, Antisthenes, Herodorus (esp. FGHist 31 F 14), and (in the fourth century) Plato's use of "Heracles as a figure for Socrates' life (and death?): *Apology* 22a, cf. *Theaetetus* 175a, *Lysis* 205c."
- [14] Pausanias X 3.1, 36.5. Ptolemaeus, Geogr. Hyph. II 184. 12. Stephanus of Byzantium, s.v. «Αντίκυρα»
- [15] Richard Hunter, translator, *Jason and the Golden Fleece* (Oxford:Clarendon Press), 1993, p 31f.
- [16] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, i. 41
- [17] Herodotus, Histories IV. 8-10.
- [18] Plutarch, *Erotikos*, 761d. The tomb of Iolaus is also mentioned by Pindar.
- [19] Pindar, *Olympian Odes*, 9.98-99.
- [20] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica*, 1.1177-1357; Theocritus, *Idyll* 13.
- [21] Sosibius, in Hesychius of Alexandria's *Lexicon*
- [22] *Bibliotheca* 2.5.8; Ptolemaeus Chennus, 147b, in Photius' *Bibliotheca*
- [23] Ptolemaeus Chennus, in Photius' *Bibliotheca*
- [24] Ptolemaeus Chennus, 147b.
- [25] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 7. 17. 8
- [26] Plutarch, *Erotikos*, 761e.
- [27] Ptolemaeus Chennus
- [28] Ptolemaeus Chennus, 147e; Philostratus, *Heroicus* 696, per Sergent, 1986, p. 163.
- [29] Scholia on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 1. 1207
- [30] Stephanus of Byzantium s. v. *Diomeia*
- [31] Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, 2. 4. 11 = 2. 7. 8

- [32] *Fabulae* 162
- [33] Scholia on Pindar, Isthmian Ode 3 (4), 104
- [34] Stephanus of Byzantium s. v. *Brettos*
- [35] Stephanus of Byzantium s. v. *Bargasa*
- [36] Servius on Virgil's *Georgics* 2. 115
- [37] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 1. 43. 1
- [38] Stephanus of Byzantium s. v. *Akelēs*
- [39] Solinus, *De mirabilia mundi*, 1. 15
- [40] Virgil, *Aeneid*, 7. 655 ff
- [41] Plutarch, Life of Sertorius, 9. 4
- [42] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 5. 24. 2
- [43] So Conon, *Narrationes*, 17. In Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2. 6. 3 a daughter of Syleus, Xenodoce, is killed by Heracles
- [44] Statius, *Thebaid*, 6. 837, 10. 249
- [45] Stephanus of Byzantium s. v. *Amathous*
- [46] Stephanus of Byzantium s. v. *Gaza*
- [47] Statius, *Thebaid*, 6. 346
- [48] Servius on Virgil's *Eclogue* 9. 30
- [49] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 1. 50. 4
- [50] Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 162
- [51] In Stephanus of Byzantium s. v. *Phaistos*, Rhopalus is the son of Heracles and Phaestus his own son; in Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 2. 6. 7, vice versa (Phaestus son, Rhopalus grandson)
- [52] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, IX l.132-3
- [53] Herodotus, *Histories* II.145
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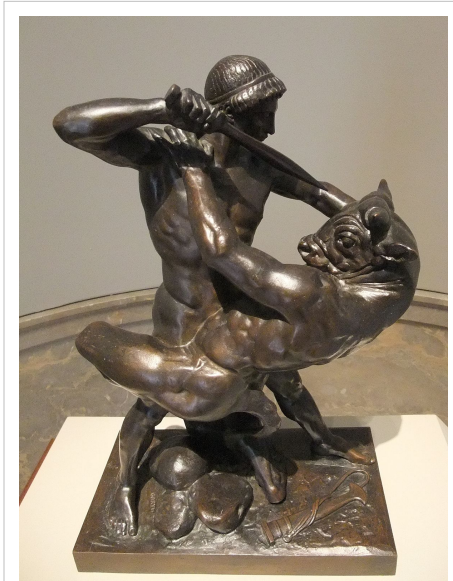
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Theseus

For other uses, see Theseus (disambiguation)

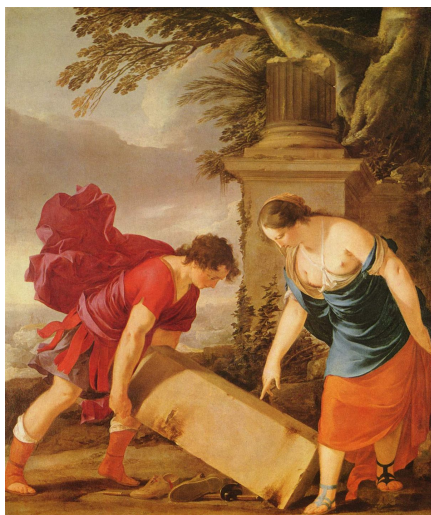
Theseus /ˈθiːsiːəs/ (Ancient Greek: Θησεύς Greek: [tʰɛːsɛ̌ʊs]) was the mythical^[1] founder-king of Athens, son of Aethra, and fathered by Aegeus and Poseidon, both of whom Aethra had slept with in one night. Theseus was a founder-hero, like Perseus, Cadmus, or Heracles, all of whom battled and overcame foes that were identified with an archaic religious and social order.^[2] As Heracles was the Dorian hero, Theseus was the Athenian founding hero, considered by them as their own great reformer: his name comes from the same root as θεσμός ("thesmos"), Greek for "institution". He was responsible for the *synoikismos* ("dwelling together")—the political unification of Attica under Athens, represented emblematically in his journey of labours, subduing highly localized ogres and monstrous beasts. Because he was the unifying king, Theseus built and occupied a palace on the fortress of the Acropolis that may have been similar to the palace that was excavated in Mycenae. Pausanias reports that after the *synoikismos*, Theseus established a cult of Aphrodite Pandemos ("Aphrodite of all the People") and Peitho on the southern slope of the Acropolis.



Theseus Slaying Minotaur (1843), bronze sculpture by Antoine-Louis Barye

Plutarch's *vita* (a literalistic biography) of Theseus makes use of varying accounts of the death of the Minotaur, Theseus' escape, and the love of Ariadne for Theseus.^[3] Plutarch's sources, not all of whose texts have survived independently, included Pherecydes (mid-sixth century BC), Demon (ca 300 BC), Philochorus, and Cleidemus (both fourth century BC).^[4]

Early years



Theseus and Aethra, by Laurent de La Hyre

Aegeus, one of the primordial kings of Athens, found a bride, Aethra who was the daughter of king Pittheus at Troezen, a small city southwest of Athens. On their wedding night, Aethra waded through the sea to the island of Sphairia that rests close to the coast and lay there with Poseidon (god of the sea and earthquakes). The mix gave Theseus a combination of divine as well as mortal characteristics in his nature; such double fathers, one immortal and one mortal, was a familiar feature of Greek heroes.^[5] After Aethra became pregnant, Aegeus decided to return to Athens. Before leaving, however, he buried his sandals and sword under a huge rock^[6] and told Aethra that when their son grew up, he should move the rock, if he were heroic enough, and take the tokens for himself as evidence of his royal parentage. In Athens, Aegeus was joined by Medea, who had fled Corinth after slaughtering the children she had borne Jason, and had taken Aegeus as her new consort. Priestess and consort together represented the old order in Athens.

Thus Theseus was raised in his mother's land. When Theseus grew up and became a brave young man, he moved the rock and recovered his father's tokens. His mother then told him the truth about his father's identity and that he must

take the sword and sandals back to king Aegeus to claim his birthright. To journey to Athens, Theseus could choose to go by sea (which was the safe way) or by land, following a dangerous path around the Saronic Gulf, where he would encounter a string of six entrances to the Underworld,^[7] each guarded by a chthonic enemy. Young, brave, and ambitious, Theseus decided to go alone by the land route and defeated a great many bandits along the way.

The Six Entrances of the Underworld

- At the first site, which was Epidaurus, sacred to Apollo and the healer Aesculapius, Theseus turned the tables on the chthonic bandit, the "clubber" Periphetes, who beat his opponents into the Earth, and took from him the stout staff that often identifies Theseus in vase-paintings. At the time, Theseus was called the Mother Dog for many reasons.
- At the Isthmian entrance to the Underworld was a robber named Sinis, often called "Pityokamptes" (Greek: Πιτυοκάμπτης, "he who bends Pinetrees"). He would capture travelers, tie them between two pine trees that were bent down to the ground, and then let the trees go, tearing his victims apart. Theseus killed him by his own method. He then became intimate with Sinis's daughter, Perigune, fathering the child Melanippus.
- In another deed north of the Isthmus, at a place called Crommyon, he killed an enormous pig, the Crommyonian Sow, bred by an old crone named Phaea. Some versions name the sow herself as Phaea. The *Bibliotheca* described the Crommyonian sow as an offspring of Typhon and Echidna.
- Near Megara, an elderly robber named Sciron forced travellers along the narrow cliff-face pathway to wash his feet. While they knelt, he kicked them off the cliff behind them, where they were eaten by a sea monster (or, in some versions, a giant turtle). Theseus pushed him off the cliff.
- Another of these enemies was Cercyon, king at the holy site of Eleusis, who challenged passers-by to a wrestling match and, when he had beaten them, killed them. Theseus beat Cercyon at wrestling and then killed him instead. In interpretations of the story that follow the formulas of Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, Cercyon was a "year-King", who was required to do an annual battle for his life, for the good of his kingdom, and was succeeded by the victor. Theseus overturned this archaic religious rite by refusing to be sacrificed.
- The last bandit was Procrustes the Stretcher, who had two beds, one of which he offered to passers-by in the plain of Eleusis. He then *made* them fit into it, either by stretching them or by cutting off their feet. Since he had two beds of different lengths, no one would fit. Theseus turned the tables on Procrustes, cutting off his legs and decapitating him with his own axe.



The deeds of Theseus, on an Attic red-figured kylix, ca. 440–430 BCE (British Museum)



Detail of the kylix at right: Theseus and the Crommyonian Sow, with Phaea

Medea and the Marathonian Bull, Androgeus and the Pallantides



Theseus captures the Marathonian Bull (kylix painted by Aison, 5th century BC)

When Theseus arrived at Athens, he did not reveal his true identity immediately. Aegeus gave him hospitality but was suspicious of the young, powerful stranger's intentions. Aegeus's wife Medea recognized Theseus immediately as Aegeus' son and worried that Theseus would be chosen as heir to Aegeus' kingdom instead of her son Medus. She tried to arrange to have Theseus killed by asking him to capture the Marathonian Bull, an emblem of Cretan power.

On the way to Marathon, Theseus took shelter from a storm in the hut of an ancient woman named Hecale. She swore to make a sacrifice to Zeus if Theseus were successful in capturing the bull. Theseus did capture the bull, but when he returned to Hecale's hut, she was dead. In her honor Theseus gave her name to one of the demes of Attica,

making its inhabitants in a sense her adopted children.

When Theseus returned victorious to Athens, where he sacrificed the Bull, Medea tried to poison him. At the last second, Aegeus recognized the sandals, shield, and sword, and knocked the poisoned wine cup from Theseus's hand. Thus father and son were reunited, and Medea, it was said, fled to Asia.

When Theseus appeared in the town, his reputation had preceded him, having travelled along the notorious coastal road from Troezen and slain some of the most feared bandits there. It was not long before the Pallantides' hopes of succeeding the apparently childless Aegeus would be lost if they did not get rid of Theseus (the Pallantides were the sons of Pallas and nephews of King Aegeus, who were then living at the royal court in the sanctuary of Delphic Apollo^[8]). So they set a trap for him. One band of them would march on the town from one side while another lay in wait near a place called Gargettus in ambush. The plan was that after Theseus, Aegeus, and the palace guards had been forced out the front, the other half would surprise them from behind. However, Theseus was not fooled. Informed of the plan by a herald named Leos, he crept out of the city at midnight and surprised the Pallantides. "Theseus then fell suddenly upon the party lying in ambush, and slew them all. Thereupon the party with Pallas dispersed," Plutarch reported.^[9]

Theseus and the Minotaur

Pasiphae, wife of King Minos of Crete, had several children before the Minotaur. The eldest of these, Androgeus, set sail for Athens to take part in the Pan-Athenian games, which were held there every five years. Being strong and skillful, he did very well, winning some events outright. He soon became a crowd favorite, much to the resentment of the Pallantides, and they assassinated him, incurring the wrath of Minos. When King Minos had heard of what befell his son, he ordered the Cretan fleet to set sail for Athens. Minos asked Aegeus for his son's assassins, and if they were to be handed to him, the town would be spared. However, not knowing who the assassins were, King Aegeus surrendered the whole town to Minos' mercy. His retribution was that, at the end of every Great Year (seven solar years), the seven most courageous youths and the seven most beautiful maidens were to board a boat and be sent as tribute to Crete, never to be seen again. In another version, King Minos of Crete had waged war with the Athenians and was successful. He then demanded that, at nine-year intervals, seven Athenian boys and seven Athenian girls were to be sent to Crete to be devoured by the Minotaur, a half-man, half-bull monster that lived in the Labyrinth created by Daedalus. On the third occasion, Theseus volunteered to slay the monster. He took the place of one of the youths and set off with a black sail, promising to his father, Aegeus, that if successful he would return with a white sail.^[10] Like the others, Theseus was stripped of his weapons when they sailed. On his arrival in Crete, Ariadne, King Minos' daughter, fell in love with Theseus and, on the advice of Daedalus, gave him a ball of thread. This was so he could find his way out of the Labyrinth.^[11] That night, Ariadne escorted Theseus to the Labyrinth, and Theseus promised that if he returned from the Labyrinth he would take Ariadne with him. As soon as Theseus entered the Labyrinth, he tied one end of the ball of string to the door post and brandished his sword which he had kept hidden from the guards inside his tunic. Theseus followed Daedalus' instructions given to Ariadne; go forwards, always down and never left or right. Theseus came to the heart of the Labyrinth and also upon the sleeping Minotaur. The beast awoke and a tremendous fight then occurred. Theseus overpowered the Minotaur with his strength and stabbed the beast in the throat with his sword (according to one *scholium* on Pindar's Fifth Nemean Ode, Theseus strangled it).^[12] After decapitating the beast, Theseus used the string to escape the Labyrinth and managed to escape with all of the young Athenians and Ariadne as well as her younger sister Phaedra. Then he and the rest of the crew fell asleep on the beach. Athena wakes Theseus and tells him to leave early that morning. Athena tells Theseus to leave Ariadne and Phaedra on the beach. Stricken with distress, Theseus forgot to put up the white sails instead of the black ones, so the king committed suicide. Dionysus later saw Ariadne crying out for Theseus and took pity on her and married her.



Theseus and the Minotaur on 6th-century
black-figure pottery

Ship of Theseus

According to Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*, the ship Theseus used on his return from Crete to Athens was kept in the Athenian harbor as a memorial for several centuries.

The ship wherein Theseus and the youth of Athens returned had thirty oars, and was preserved by the Athenians down even to the time of Demetrius Phalereus,^[13] for they took away the old planks as they decayed, putting in new and stronger timber in their place...

The ship had to be maintained in a seaworthy state, for, in return for Theseus's successful mission, the Athenians had pledged to honour Apollo every year henceforth. Thus, the Athenians sent a religious mission to the island of Delos (one of Apollo's most sacred sanctuaries) on the Athenian state galley — the ship itself — to pay their fealty to the god. To preserve the purity of the occasion, no executions were permitted between the time when the religious ceremony began to when the ship returned from Delos, which took several weeks.^[14]

To preserve the ship, any wood that wore out or rotted was replaced; it was, thus, unclear to philosophers how much of the original ship actually remained, giving rise to the philosophical question whether it should be considered "the same" ship or not. Such philosophical questions about the nature of identity are sometimes referred to as the Ship of Theseus Paradox.

Regardless of these issues of the originality of the ship's structure, for Athenians the preserved ship kept fresh their understanding that Theseus had been an actual, historic figure — which none then doubted — and gave them a tangible connection to their divine providence.

Theseus and Pirithous



Theseus Defeats the Centaur by Antonio Canova (1804–1819), Kunsthistorisches Museum

Theseus's best friend was Pirithous, prince of the Lapiths. Pirithous had heard stories of Theseus's courage and strength in battle but wanted proof, so he rustled Theseus's herd of cattle and drove it from Marathon, and Theseus set out in pursuit. Pirithous took up his arms and the pair met to do battle, but were so impressed with each other they took an oath of friendship and joined the hunt for the Calydonian Boar. In *Iliad* I, Nestor numbers Pirithous and Theseus "of heroic fame" among an earlier generation of heroes of his youth, "the strongest men that Earth has bred, the strongest men against the strongest enemies, a savage mountain-dwelling tribe whom they utterly destroyed." No trace of such an oral tradition, which Homer's listeners would have recognized in Nestor's allusion, survived in literary epic.

Later, Pirithous was preparing to marry Hippodamia. The centaurs were guests at the wedding feast, but got drunk and tried to abduct the women, including Hippodamia. The Lapiths won the ensuing battle.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Theseus fights against and kills Eurytus, the "fiercest of all the fierce centaurs"^[15] at the wedding of Pirithous and Hippodamia.

The abduction of Helen and encounter with Hades

Theseus, a great abductor of women, and his bosom companion, Pirithous, since they were sons of Zeus and Poseidon, pledged themselves to marry daughters of Zeus.^[16] Theseus, in an old tradition,^[17] chose Helen, and together they kidnapped her, intending to keep her until she was old enough to marry. Pirithous chose Persephone. They left Helen with Theseus's mother, Aethra at Aphidna, whence she was rescued by the Dioscuri.

On Pirithous' behalf they travelled to the underworld, domain of Persephone and her husband, Hades. As they wandered through the outskirts of Tartarus, Theseus sat down to rest on a rock. As he did so he felt his limbs change and grow stiff. He tried to rise but could not. He was fixed to the rock on which he sat. Then, as he turned to cry out to his friend Pirithous, he saw that he himself was crying out too. Around him was standing the terrible band of Furies with snakes in their hair, torches and long whips in their hands. Before these monsters the hero's courage failed and by them was led away to eternal punishment.

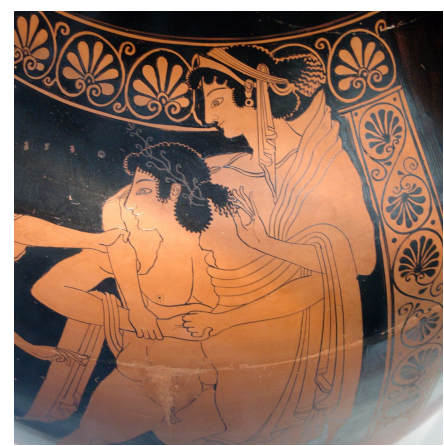
For many months in half darkness, Theseus sat immovably fixed to the rock, mourning both for his friend and for himself. In the end he was rescued by Heracles. He had come down to the underworld for his 12th task. There he persuaded Persephone to forgive him for the part he had taken in the rash venture of Pirithous. So Theseus was restored to the upper air but Pirithous never left the kingdom of the dead for when he tried to free Pirithous, the Underworld shook. When Theseus returned to Athens, he found that the Dioscuri had taken Helen and Aethra to Sparta.

The friendship of Theseus and Pirithous acquired homoerotic undertone in Attic comedy. Heracles succeeded in freeing only Theseus, and left behind his buttocks attached to the rocks - from which Theseus came to be called hypolispos, meaning "with hinder parts rubbed smooth." This was meant as an obscene comment upon how his buttocks had been "rubbed" the wrong way. (The myth was possibly retrospectively constructed in order to account for the obscene phrase.)

Hippolyta

Theseus, believed either to be in the company of Heracles, or of his own accord, had been on a quest in the land of the Amazons, a race of all-female warriors who had sex with men for reproduction but killed or banished any male children born. Sensing no trouble or malice from Theseus, the Amazons decided to welcome him by having the queen Hippolyta go aboard his ship bearing gifts. After boarding the ship, Theseus left for Athens, claiming Hippolyta as his bride. This sparked a war between the Amazons and the Athenians. Hippolyta eventually bore a son for Theseus, whom they named Hippolytus (Ἱππόλυτος). Theseus lost his love for Hippolyta, however, after he had seen Phaedra.

Plutarch's *Life* places Hyppolyta's Amazonian sister, Antiope, as the Amazonian kidnapped by Theseus. In this account, Antiope is the mother of Hyppolytus (named after her sister).



Theseus carries off the willing Helen, on an Attic red-figure amphora, ca. 510 BCE

Phaedra and Hippolytus

Phaedra, Theseus's second wife, bore Theseus two sons, Demophon and Acamas. While these two were still in their infancy, Phaedra fell in love with Hippolytus, Theseus's son by Hippolyta. According to some versions of the story, Hippolytus had scorned Aphrodite to become a devotee of Artemis, so Aphrodite made Phaedra fall in love with him as punishment. He rejected her out of chastity.

Alternatively, in Euripides' version, *Hippolytus*, Phaedra's nurse told Hippolytus of her mistress's love and he swore he would not reveal the nurse as his source of information. To ensure that she would die with dignity, Phaedra wrote to Theseus on a tablet claiming that Hippolytus had raped her before hanging herself. Theseus believed her and used one of the three wishes he had received from Poseidon against his son. The curse caused Hippolytus' horses to be frightened by a sea monster, usually a bull, and drag their rider to his death. Artemis would later tell Theseus the truth, promising to avenge her loyal follower on another follower of Aphrodite.

In a version by Seneca, the Roman playwright, entitled *Phaedra*, after Phaedra told Theseus that Hippolytus had raped her, Theseus killed his son himself, and Phaedra committed suicide out of guilt, for she had not intended for Hippolytus to die.

In yet another version, Phaedra simply told Theseus Hippolytus had raped her and did not kill herself, and Dionysus sent a wild bull which terrified Hippolytus's horses.

A cult grew up around Hippolytus, associated with the cult of Aphrodite. Girls who were about to be married offered locks of their hair to him. The cult believed that Asclepius had resurrected Hippolytus and that he lived in a sacred forest near Aricia in Latium.

Other stories and his death

According to sources, Theseus also was one of the Argonauts, although Apollonius of Rhodes states in the *Argonautica* that Theseus was still in the underworld at this time. Both statements are inconsistent with Medea being Aegeus' wife by the time Theseus first came to Athens. With Phaedra, Theseus fathered Acamas, who was one of those who hid in the Trojan Horse during the Trojan War. Theseus welcomed the wandering Oedipus and helped Adrastus to bury the Seven Against Thebes.

Lycomedes of the island of Skyros threw Theseus off a cliff after he had lost popularity in Athens. In 475 BC, in response to an oracle, Cimon of Athens, having conquered Skyros for the Athenians, identified as the remains of Theseus "a coffin of a great corpse with a bronze spear-head by its side and a sword." (Plutarch, *Life of Cimon*, quoted Burkert 1985, p. 206). The remains found by Cimon were reburied in Athens. The early modern name *Theseion* (Temple of Theseus) was mistakenly applied to the Temple of Hephaestus which was thought to be the actual site of the hero's tomb.

Adaptations of the myth

Prose

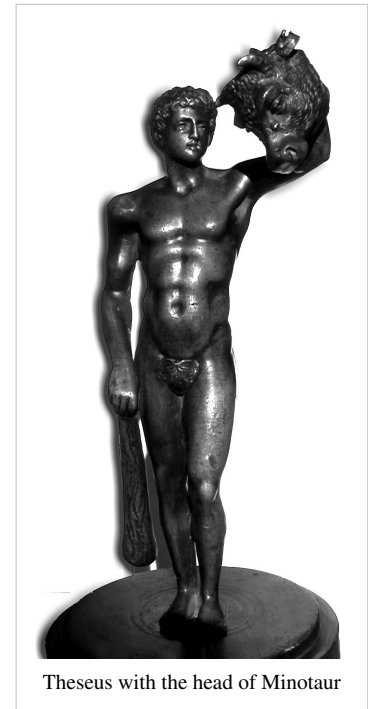
Racine's *Phèdre* (1677) features Theseus as well as Hippolytus and the title character.

Theseus is a prominent character as the Duke of Athens in William Shakespeare's plays, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Hippolyta also appears in both plays. Theseus likewise appears as a major character in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*.

Mary Renault's *The King Must Die* (1958) is a dramatic retelling of the Theseus legend through the return from Crete to Athens. While fictional, it is generally faithful to the spirit and flavor of the best-known variations of the original story. The sequel is *The Bull from the Sea* (1962), about the hero's later career.

Kir Bulychev's 1993 book *An Attempt on Theseus' Life* (Покушение на Тезея) is about a plot to assassinate a man during a virtual reality tour in which he lives through Theseus' life.

John Dempsey's "Ariadne's Brother: A Novel on the Fall of Bronze Age Crete" (1996, ISBN 960-219-062-0) tells the Minoan Cretan version of these events based on both archaeology and myth.



Theseus with the head of Minotaur

Troy Denning's 1996 novel *Pages of Pain* features an amnesic Theseus fighting to recover his past while interacting with some of the more colorful beings of the Planescape universe.

Steven Pressfield's 2002 novel *Last of the Amazons* attempts to situate Theseus's meeting and subsequent marriage to Antiope, as well as the ensuing war, in a historically plausible setting.

Jorge Luis Borges presents an interesting variation of the myth in a short story, "La Casa de Asterión" ("The House of Asterion").

British comedian Tony Robinson wrote a version of the Theseus story entitled "Theseus: Super Hero".

Author Tracy Barrett wrote a novel titled *Dark of the Moon*, published in 2011, which is a re-write of the Theseus Myth.

Author Suzanne Collins was inspired by Theseus to write *The Hunger Games* trilogy, which was published from 2008–2010.^[18]

Film and television

Theseus is played by Bob Mathias in the 1960 film *Minotaur, the Wild Beast of Crete*, and by Tom Hardy in the 2006 film *Minotaur*.

A 1971 Soviet cartoon, "The Labyrinth", covers the titular adventure as well as Theseus's encounters with the Crommyonian sow and Procrustes.

In the 2011 Tarsem Singh film, *Immortals*, Theseus (played by Henry Cavill) leads a war against the mortal king Hyperion (played by Mickey Rourke) of Heraklion.

Notes

- [1] For the ancient Greeks, convinced that Theseus had actually existed, he was not mythic, of course, but legendary.
- [2] See Carl A.P. Ruck and Danny Staples, *The World of Classical Myth* (Carolina Academic Press, 1994), ch. ix "Theseus: Making the New Athens" pp 203–22: "This was a major cultural transition, like the making of the new Olympia by Hercules" (p. 204).
- [3] "May I therefore succeed in purifying Fable, making her submit to reason and take on the semblance of History. But where she obstinately disdains to make herself credible, and refuses to admit any element of probability, I shall pray for kindly readers, and such as receive with indulgence the tales of antiquity." (Plutarch, *Life of Theseus*). Plutarch's avowed purpose is to construct a life that parallels the *vita* of Romulus that embodies the founding myth of Rome.
- [4] Edmund P. Cueva, "Plutarch's Ariadne in Chariton's Chaereas and Callirhoe" *American Journal of Philology* **117.3** (Fall 1996) pp. 473–484.
- [5] The theory, expounded as natural history by Aristotle, was accepted through the nineteenth century and only proven wrong in modern genetics: see Telegony (heredity). Sometimes in myth the result could be twins, one born divine of a divine father, the other human of a human sire: see Dioscuri. Of a supposed Parnassos, founder of Delphi, Pausanias observes, "Like the other heroes, as they are called, he had two fathers; one they say was the god Poseidon, the human father being Cleopompus." (*Description of Greece* x.6.1).
- [6] Rock "which had a hollow in it just large enough to receive these objects," Plutarch explains.
- [7] Compared to Hercules and his Labours, "Theseus is occupied only with the sacred Entrances that are local to the lands of Athens" (Ruck and Staples 1994:204).
- [8] "...where now is the enclosure in the Delphinium, for that is where the house of Aegeus stood, and the Hermes to the east of the sanctuary is called the Hermes at Aegeus's gate." (Plutarch, 12)
- [9] Plutarch, 13.
- [10] Plutarch quotes Simonides to the effect that the alternate sail given by Aegeus was not white, but "a scarlet sail dyed with the tender flower of luxuriant holm oak." (Plutarch, 17.5).
- [11] Ariadne is sometimes represented in vase-paintings with the thread wound on her spindle.
- [12] Noted by Kerenyi 1959:232 note 532.
- [13] Demetrius Phalereus was a distinguished orator and statesman, who governed Athens for a decade before being exiled, in 307 BCE.
- [14] Cooper, John M., ed. (1997). *Plato: Complete Works*. Associate editor, D. S. Hutchinson. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett. p. 37. ISBN 0-87220-349-2.
- [15] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XII:217-153
- [16] Scholia on *Iliad* iii.144 and a fragment (#227) of Pindar, according to Kerenyi 1951:237, note 588.
- [17] Reported at Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 13.4 (557a) (<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/Literature/Literature-idx?type=turn&id=Literature.AthV3&entity=Literature.AthV3.p0079&q1=helen&pview=hide>); cf. Kerenyi 1959:234 and note.
- [18] Zeitchik, Steven (March 24, 2012). "Which dystopian property does 'The Hunger Games' most resemble?" (http://www.bostonherald.com/entertainment/movies/general/view/20120324which_dystopian_property_does_the_hunger_games_most_resemble/). *Los Angeles Times via Boston Herald* (Boston Herald and Herald Media). . Retrieved March 24, 2012.

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External links

- (Theoi Project) Plutarch: Life of Theseus (<http://www.theoi.com/Text/PlutarchTheseus.html>)

Odysseus

Odysseus (Ὀδυσσεύς /oʊˈdɪsiəs/ or /oʊˈdɪsjuːs/; Greek: Ὀδυσσεύς, *Odusseus*), also known by the Roman name **Ulysses** (/juːˈliːsiːz/; Latin: *Ulyssēs*, *Ulixēs*), was the perhaps fictional Greek king of Ithaca and the hero of Homer's epic poem the *Odyssey*. Odysseus also plays a key role in Homer's *Iliad* and other works in the Epic Cycle.

Husband of Penelope, father of Telemachus, and son of Laërtes and Anticlea, Odysseus is renowned for his guile and resourcefulness, and is hence known by the epithet Odysseus the Cunning (*mētis*, or "cunning intelligence"). He is most famous for the ten eventful years he took to return home after the ten-year Trojan War and his famous Trojan Horse trick.

Name, etymology and epithets

The name has several variants: **Olyseus** (Ὀλυσσεύς), **Oulixeus** (Οὐλίξεύς), **Oulixes** (Οὐλίξις)^[1] and he was known as **Ulyssēs** in Latin or **Ulixēs** in Roman mythology.

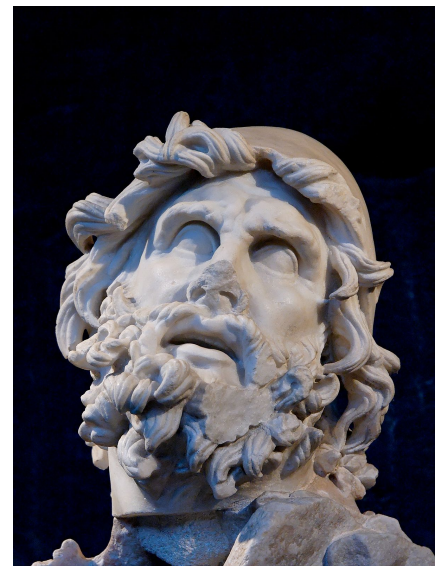
The etymology of the name is contested, according to one view, the name *Odysseus* derives from the verb **odussomai** (ὀδύσσομαι), meaning "to be wrath against", "hate", suggesting that the name could be rendered as "the one who is wrathful/hated".^{[2][3][4][5][6][7]} Alternatively, it has been also suggested that this is of non-Greek origin and probably of non-Indo-European origin too, while it is of an unknown etymology.^[8]

In the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* there are several epithets to describe Odysseus. In *Odyssey* 19, in which Odysseus's early childhood is recounted, Euryclea asks Autolycus, to name him. Euryclea tries to guide him to naming the boy *Polyaretos*, "for he has *much* been *prayed for*" (19.403f).^[9] In Greek, however, *Polyaretos* can also take the opposite meaning: much *accursed*. Autolycus seems to infer this connotation of the name and accordingly names his grandson Odysseus. Odysseus often receives the patronymic epithet *Laertiades* (Greek: Λαερτιάδης), *son of Laërtes*.

His name and stories were adopted into Etruscan religion under the name 𐌸𐌹𐌺𐌺𐌰 *Uthuze*.^[10]

Genealogy

Relatively little is known of Odysseus's background other than that his paternal grandfather (or step-grandfather) is Arcesius, son of Cephalus and grandson of Aeolus, whilst his maternal grandfather is the thief Autolycus, son of Hermes and Chione. According to *The Odyssey*, his father is Laertes^[11] and his mother Anticlea, although there was a non-Homeric tradition^[12] that Sisyphus was his true father, but that serves as an insult to his character. The rumor went that Laertes bought Odysseus from the conniving king^[13]. However, his true lineage is always brought out in plays by the end.^[14] Odysseus is said to have a younger sister, Ctimene, who went to Same to be married and is mentioned by the swineherd Eumaeus, whom she grew up alongside, in Book XV of *the Odyssey*.^[15] Ithaca, an island along the Ionian northwestern coastline of Greece.



Head of Odysseus from a Greek 2nd century BC marble group representing Odysseus blinding Polyphemus, found at the villa of Tiberius at Sperlonga

"Cruel Odysseus"

Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* portrayed Odysseus as a culture hero, but the Romans, who believed themselves the scions of Prince Aeneas of Troy, considered him a villainous falsifier. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, he is constantly referred to as "cruel Odysseus" (Latin "*dirus Ulixes*") or "deceitful Odysseus" ("*pellacis*", "*fandi fictor*"). Turnus, in *Aeneid* ix, reproaches the Trojan Ascanius with images of rugged, forthright Latin virtues, declaring (in John Dryden's translation), "You shall not find the sons of Atreus here, nor need the frauds of sly Ulysses fear." While the Greeks admired his cunning and deceit, these qualities did not recommend themselves to the Romans who possessed a rigid sense of honour. In Euripides's tragedy *Iphigenia at Aulis*, having convinced Agamemnon to consent to the sacrifice of his daughter, Iphigenia, to appease the goddess Artemis, Odysseus facilitates the immolation by telling her mother, Clytemnestra, that the girl is to be wed to Achilles. His attempts to avoid his sacred oath to defend Menelaus and Helen offended Roman notions of duty; the many stratagems and tricks that he employed to get his way offended Roman notions of honour.

Before the Trojan War

The majority of sources for Odysseus' antebellum exploits—principally the mythographers Pseudo-Apollodorus and Hyginus—postdate Homer by many centuries. Two stories in particular are well known:

When Helen was abducted, Menelaus called upon the other suitors to honour their oaths and help him to retrieve her, an attempt that would lead to the Trojan War. Odysseus tried to avoid it by feigning lunacy, as an oracle had prophesied a long-delayed return home for him if he went. He hooked a donkey and an ox to his plough (as they have different stride lengths, hindering the efficiency of the plough) and (some modern sources add) started sowing his fields with salt. Palamedes, at the behest of Menelaus's brother Agamemnon, sought to disprove Odysseus's madness, and placed Telemachus, Odysseus's infant son, in front of the plough. Odysseus veered the plough away from his son, thus exposing his stratagem.^[16] Odysseus held a grudge against Palamedes during the war for dragging him away from his home.

Odysseus and other envoys of Agamemnon then traveled to Scyros to recruit Achilles because of a prophecy that Troy could not be taken without him. By most accounts, Thetis, Achilles's mother, disguised the youth as a woman to hide him from the recruiters because an oracle had predicted that Achilles would either live a long, uneventful life or achieve everlasting glory while dying young. Odysseus cleverly discovered which among the women before him was Achilles, when the youth was the only one of them showing interest to examine the weapons hidden among an array of adornment gifts for the daughters of their host. Odysseus arranged then further for the sounding of a battle horn, which prompted Achilles to clutch a weapon and show his trained disposition; with his disguise foiled, he was exposed and joined Agamemnon's call to arms among the Hellenes.^[17]

During the Trojan War

The *Iliad*

Odysseus was one of the most influential Greek champions during the Trojan War. Along with Nestor and Idomeneus he was one of the most trusted counsellors and advisers. He always championed the Achaean cause, especially when the king was in question, as in one instance when Thersites spoke against him. When Agamemnon, to test the morale of the Achaeans, announced his intentions to depart Troy, Odysseus restored order to the Greek camp.^[18] Later on, after many of the heroes had left the battlefield due to injuries (including Odysseus and Agamemnon), Odysseus once again persuaded Agamemnon not to withdraw. Along with two other envoys, he was chosen in the failed embassy to try to persuade Achilles to return to combat.^[19]

When Hector proposed a single combat duel, Odysseus was one of the Danaans who reluctantly volunteered to battle him. Telamonian Ajax, however, was the volunteer who eventually did fight Hector. Odysseus aided Diomedes

during the successful night operations in order to kill Rhesus, because it had been foretold that if his horses drank from the Scamander river Troy could not be taken.^[20]

After Patroclus had been slain, it was Odysseus who counselled Achilles to let the Achaean men eat and rest rather than follow his rage-driven desire to go back on the offensive—and kill Trojans—immediately. Eventually (and reluctantly), he consented.

During the funeral games for Patroclus, Odysseus became involved in a wrestling match with Telamonian Ajax, as well as a foot race. With the help of the goddess Athena, who favoured him, and despite Apollo's helping another of the competitors, he won the race and managed to draw the wrestling match, to the surprise of all.^[21]

Odysseus has traditionally been viewed in the *Iliad* as Achilles's antithesis: while Achilles's anger is all-consuming and of a self-destructive nature, Odysseus is frequently viewed as a man of the mean, renowned for his self-restraint and diplomatic skills. He is more conventionally viewed as the antithesis of Telamonian Ajax (Shakespeare's "beef-witted" Ajax) because the latter has only brawn to recommend him, while Odysseus is not only ingenious (as evidenced by his idea for the Trojan Horse), but an eloquent speaker, a skill perhaps best demonstrated in the embassy to Achilles in book 9 of the *Iliad*. And the two are not only foils in the abstract but often opposed in practice; they have many duels and run-ins (for examples see the next section).

Other stories from the Trojan War

When the Achaean ships reached the beach of Troy, no one would jump ashore, since there was an oracle that the first Achaean to jump on Trojan soil would die. Odysseus tossed his shield on the shore and jumped on his shield. He was followed by Protesilaus, who jumped on Trojan soil and later became the first to die.

Odysseus never forgave Palamedes for unmasking his feigned madness, leading him to frame him as a traitor. At one point, Odysseus convinced a Trojan captive to write a letter pretending to be from Palamedes. A sum of gold was mentioned to have been sent as a reward for Palamedes's treachery. Odysseus then killed the prisoner and hid the gold in Palamedes's tent. He ensured that the letter was found and acquired by Agamemnon, and also gave hints directing the Argives to the gold. This was evidence enough for the Greeks and they had Palamedes stoned to death. Other sources say that Odysseus and Diomedes goaded Palamedes into descending a wall with the prospect of treasure being at the bottom. When Palamedes reached the bottom, the two proceeded to bury him with stones, killing him.^[22]

When Achilles was slain in battle, it was Odysseus and Telamonian Ajax who successfully retrieved the fallen warrior's body and armour in the thick of heavy fighting. During the funeral games for Achilles, Odysseus competed once again with Telamonian Ajax. Thetis said that the arms of Achilles would go to the bravest of the Greeks, but only these two warriors dared lay claim to that title. The two Argives became embroiled in a heavy dispute about one another's merits to receive the reward. The Greeks dithered out of fear in deciding a winner, because they did not want to insult one and have him abandon the war effort. Nestor suggested that they allow the captive Trojans decide the winner.^[23] Some accounts disagree, suggesting that the Greeks themselves held a secret vote.^[24] In any case, Odysseus was the winner. Enraged and humiliated, Ajax was driven mad by Athena. When he returned to his senses, in shame at how he had slaughtered livestock in his madness, Ajax killed himself by the sword that Hector had given him.^[25]

Together with Diomedes, Odysseus went to fetch Achilles' son, Pyrrhus, to come to the aid of the Achaeans, because an oracle had stated that Troy could not be taken without him. A great warrior, Pyrrhus was also called Neoptolemus (Greek: "*new warrior*"). Upon the success of the mission, Odysseus gave Achilles' armor to him.

It was later learned that the war could not be won without the poisonous arrows of Heracles, which were owned by the abandoned Philoctetes. Odysseus and Diomedes (or, according to some accounts, Odysseus and Neoptolemus) went out to retrieve them. Upon their arrival, Philoctetes (still suffering from the wound) was seen still to be enraged at the Danaans, especially Odysseus, for abandoning him. Although his first instinct was to shoot Odysseus, his anger was eventually diffused by Odysseus's persuasive powers and the influence of the gods. Odysseus returned to

the Argive camp with Philoctetes and his arrows.^[26]

Odysseus and Diomedes would later steal the Palladium that lay within Troy's walls, for the Greeks were told they could not sack the city without it. Some sources indicate that Odysseus schemed to kill his partner on the way back, but Diomedes thwarted this attempt.

Perhaps Odysseus' most famous contribution to the Greek war effort was devising the stratagem of the Trojan Horse, which allowed the Greek army to sneak into Troy under cover of darkness. It was built by Epeius and filled with Greek warriors, led by Odysseus.^[27]

Journey home to Ithaca

Odysseus is probably best known as the eponymous hero of the *Odyssey*. This epic describes his travails as he tries to return home after the Trojan War and reassert his place as rightful king of Ithaca.

On the way home from Troy, after a raid on Ismaros in the land of the Cicones, he and his twelve ships were driven off course by storms. They visited the lethargic Lotus-Eaters and were captured by the Cyclops Polyphemus, only escaping by blinding him with a wooden stake. While they were escaping, however, Odysseus foolishly told Polyphemus his identity, and Polyphemus told his father, Poseidon, who had blinded him. They stayed with Aeolus, the master of the winds; he gave Odysseus a leather bag containing all the winds, except the west wind, a gift that should have ensured a safe return home. However, the sailors foolishly opened the bag while Odysseus slept, thinking that it contained gold. All of the winds flew out and the resulting storm drove the ships back the way they had come, just as Ithaca came into sight.

After pleading in vain with Aeolus to help them again, they re-embarked and encountered the cannibalistic Laestrygonians. Odysseus' ship was the only one to escape. He sailed on and visited the witch-goddess Circe. She turned half of his men into swine after feeding them cheese and wine. Hermes warned Odysseus about Circe and gave Odysseus a drug called moly, a resistance to Circe's magic. Circe, being attracted to Odysseus' resistance, fell in love with him and released his men. Odysseus and his crew remained with her on the island for one year, while they feasted and drank. Finally, Odysseus' men convinced Odysseus that it was time to leave for Ithaca.

Guided by Circe's instructions, Odysseus and his crew crossed the ocean and reached a harbor at the western edge of the world, where Odysseus sacrificed to the dead and summoned the spirit of the old prophet Tiresias to advise him. Next Odysseus met the spirit of his own mother, who had died of grief during his long absence; from her, he learned for the first time news of his own household, threatened by the greed of Penelope's suitors. Returning to Circe's island, they were advised by her on the remaining stages of the journey. They skirted the land of the Sirens, passed between the six-headed monster Scylla and the whirlpool Charybdis, where they rowed directly between the two. However, Scylla dragged the boat towards her by grabbing the oars and ate six men. They landed on the island of Thrinacia. There, Odysseus' men ignored the warnings of Tiresias and Circe and hunted down the sacred cattle of the sun god Helios. This sacrilege was punished by a shipwreck in which all but Odysseus drowned. He was washed ashore on the island of Calypso, where she compelled him to remain as her lover for seven years before he escaped.

Odysseus finally escapes and is shipwrecked and befriended by the Phaeacians. After telling them his story, the Phaeacians led by King Alcinous agree to help Odysseus get home. They deliver him at night, while he is fast asleep, to a hidden harbor on Ithaca. He finds his way to the hut of one of his own former slaves, the swineherd Eumaeus,



This is a painting of Odysseus's boat passing between the six-headed monster Scylla and the whirlpool Charybdis. Scylla has plucked six of Odysseus's men from the boat. The painting is an Italian fresco dating to 1560 C.E.

and also meets up with Telemachus returning from Sparta. Athena disguises Odysseus as a wandering beggar in order to learn how things stand in his household.

When the disguised Odysseus returns, Penelope announces in her long interview with the disguised hero that whoever can string Odysseus's rigid bow and shoot an arrow through twelve axe shafts may have her hand. "For the plot of the *Odyssey*, of course, her decision is the turning point, the move that makes possible the long-predicted triumph of the returning hero".^[28] Odysseus' identity is discovered by the housekeeper, Eurycleia, as she is washing his feet and discovers an old scar Odysseus received during a boar hunt. Odysseus swears her to secrecy, threatening to kill her if she tells anyone.

When the contest of the bow begins, none of the suitors are able to string the bow, but Odysseus does, and wins the contest. Having done so, he proceeds to slaughter the suitors—beginning with Antinous whom he finds drinking from Odysseus' cup—with help from Telemachus, Athena and two servants, Eumaeus the swineherd and Philoetius the cowherd. Odysseus tells the serving women who slept with the suitors to clean up the mess of corpses and then has those women hanged in terror. He tells Telemachus that he will replenish his stocks by raiding nearby islands. Odysseus has now revealed himself in all his glory (with a little makeover by Athena); yet Penelope cannot believe that her husband has really returned—she fears that it is perhaps some god in disguise, as in the story of Alcmena—and tests him by ordering her servant Euryclea to move the bed in their wedding-chamber. Odysseus protests that this cannot be done since he made the bed himself and knows that one of its legs is a living olive tree. Penelope finally accepts that he truly is her husband, a moment that highlights their *homophrosýnē* (like-mindedness).

The next day Odysseus and Telemachus visit the country farm of his old father Laertes. The citizens of Ithaca follow Odysseus on the road, planning to avenge the killing of the Suitors, their sons. The goddess Athena intervenes and persuades both sides to make peace.

Other stories

Odysseus is one of the most recurrent characters in Western culture.

Classical

According to some late sources, most of them purely genealogical, Odysseus had many other children besides Telemachus, the most famous being:

- with Penelope: Poliporthes (born after Odysseus's return from Troy)
- with Circe: Telegonus, Ardeas, Latinus
- with Calypso: Nausithous, Nausinous
- with Callidice: Polypoetes
- with Euipe: Euryalus
- with daughter of Thoas: Leontophonus

Most such genealogies aimed to link Odysseus with the foundation of many Italic cities in remote antiquity.

He figures in the end of the story of King Telephus of Mysia.

The supposed last poem in the Epic Cycle is called the *Telegony*, and is thought to tell the story of Odysseus's last voyage, and of his death at the hands of Telegonus, his son with Circe. The poem, like the others of the cycle, is "lost" in that no authentic version has been discovered.

In 5th century BC Athens, tales of the Trojan War were popular subjects for tragedies. Odysseus figures centrally or indirectly in a number of the extant plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles, (*Ajax*, *Philoctetes*) and Euripides, (*Hecuba*, *Rhesus*, *Cyclops*) and figured in still more that have not survived. In the *Ajax*, Sophocles portrays Odysseus as a modernistic voice of reasoning compared to the title character's rigid antiquity.

As Ulysses, he is mentioned regularly in Virgil's *Aeneid*, and the poem's hero, Aeneas, rescues one of Ulysses's crew members who was left behind on the island of the Cyclops. He in turn offers a first-person account of some of the same events Homer relates, in which Ulysses appears directly. Virgil's Ulysses typifies his view of the Greeks: he is cunning but impious, and ultimately malicious and hedonistic.

Ovid retells parts of Ulysses's journeys, focusing on his romantic involvements with Circe and Calypso, and recasts him as, in Harold Bloom's phrase, "one of the great wandering womanizers." Ovid also gives a detailed account of the contest between Ulysses and Ajax for the armor of Achilles.

Greek legend tells of Ulysses as the founder of Lisbon, Portugal, calling it *Ulisipo* or *Ulisseyia*, during his twenty-year errand on the Mediterranean and Atlantic seas. Olisipo was Lisbon's name in the Roman Empire. Basing in this folk etymology, the belief that Ulysses is recounted by Strabo based on Asclepiades of Myrleia's words, by Pomponius Mela, by Gaius Julius Solinus (3rd century A.D.), and finally by Camões in his epic poem *Lusiads*.^[29]

Middle Ages and Renaissance

Dante, in Canto 26 of the Inferno of his *Divine Comedy*, encounters Odysseus ("Ulisse" in the original Italian) near the very bottom of Hell: with Diomedes, he walks wrapped in flame in the eighth ring (Counselors of Fraud) of the Eighth Circle (Sins of Malice), as punishment for his schemes and conspiracies that won the Trojan War. In a famous passage, Dante has Odysseus relate a different version of his final voyage and death from the one foreshadowed by Homer. He tells how he set out with his men for one final journey of exploration to sail beyond the Pillars of Hercules and into the Western sea to find what adventures awaited them. Men, says Ulisse, are not made to live like brutes, but to follow virtue and knowledge.^[30]

After travelling west and south for five months, they saw in the distance a great mountain rising from the sea (this is Purgatory, in Dante's cosmology) before a storm sank them. Dante did not have access to the original Greek texts of the Homeric epics, so his knowledge of their subject-matter was based only on information from later sources, chiefly Virgil's *Aeneid* but also Ovid; hence the discrepancy between Dante and Homer.

He appears in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, set during the Trojan War.

Modern

Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem "Ulysses" presents an aging king who has seen too much of the world to be happy sitting on a throne idling his days away. Leaving the task of civilizing his people to his son, he gathers together a band of old comrades "to sail beyond the sunset".

James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* uses modern literary devices to narrate a single day in the life of a Dublin businessman named Leopold Bloom. Bloom's day turns out to bear many elaborate parallels to Odysseus' twenty years of wandering.

In Virginia Woolf's response novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*, the comparative character is Clarissa Dalloway, who also appeared in *Voyage Out* and several short stories.

Cream's song "Tales of Brave Ulysses" speaks somewhat of the travels of Odysseus including his encounter with the Sirens. An unnamed Odysseus figure is the narrator of the Steely Dan song, "Home at Last."

Frederick Rolfe's *The Weird of the Wanderer* has the hero Nicholas Crabbe (based on the author) travelling back in time, discovering that he is the reincarnation of Odysseus, marrying Helen, being deified and ending up as one of the three Magi.

In Dan Simmons' novels *Ilium* and *Olympos*, Odysseus is encountered both at Troy and on a futuristic Earth.

Nikos Kazantzakis' *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel*, a 33,333 line epic poem, begins with Odysseus cleansing his body of the blood of Penelope's suitors. Odysseus soon leaves Ithaca in search of new adventures. Before his death he abducts Helen; incites revolutions in Crete and Egypt; communes with God; and meets representatives of various famous historical and literary figures, such as Vladimir Lenin, Don Quixote and Jesus.

Ulysses 31 is a Japanese-French anime series, published in 1981, which updates the Greek and Roman mythologies of Ulysses (or Odysseus) to the 31st century. In the series, the gods are angered when Ulysses, commander of the giant spaceship *Odyssey*, kills the giant Cyclops to rescue a group of enslaved children including Telemachus. Zeus sentences Ulysses to travel the universe with his crew frozen until he finds the Kingdom of Hades, at which point his crew will be revived and he will be able to return to Earth. In one episode, he travels back in time and meets the Odysseus of the Greek myth.

Early 20th century British composer Cecil Armstrong Gibbs's second symphony (for chorus and orchestra) is named after and based on the story of Odysseus, with text by Essex poet Mordaunt Currie.

Suzanne Vega's song "Calypso" shows Odysseus from Calypso's point of view, and tells the tale of him coming to the island and his leaving.

Joel and Ethan Coen's film *O Brother Where Art Thou?* (2000) is loosely based on the *Odyssey*. However, the Coens have stated that they hadn't ever read the epic. George Clooney plays Ulysses Everett McGill, leading a group of escapees from a chain gang through an adventure in search of the proceeds of an armoured truck heist. On their voyage, the gang encounter—amongst other characters—a trio of Sirens and a one-eyed bible salesman.



The bay of Palaiokastritsa in Corfu as seen from Bella vista of Lakones. Corfu is considered to be the mythical island of the Phaeacians. The bay of Palaiokastritsa is considered to be the place where Odysseus disembarked and met Nausicaa for the first time. The rock in the sea visible near the horizon at the top centre-left of the picture is considered by the locals to be the mythical petrified ship of Odysseus. The side of the rock toward the mainland is curved in such a way as to resemble the extended sail of a trireme

In S.M. Stirling's *Island in the Sea of Time* trilogy, Odikweos (Mycenean spelling) is a 'historical' figure who is every bit as cunning as his legendary self and is one of the few Bronze Age inhabitants who discerns the time-traveller's real background. Odikweos first aids William Walker's rise to power in Achaea and later helps bring Walker down after seeing his homeland turn into a police state.

Between 1978 and 1979, German director Tony Munzlinger made a documentary series called *Unterwegs mit Odysseus* (roughly translated: "Journeying with Odysseus"), in which a film team sails across the Mediterranean Sea trying to find traces of Odysseus in the modern-day settings of the *Odyssey*. In between the film crew's exploits, hand-drawn scissor-cut cartoons are inserted which relate the hero's story, with actor Hans Clarin providing the narratives.

The Penelopiad by Margaret Atwood retells the story from the point of view of Penelope.

Lindsay Clarke's *The War at Troy* features Odysseus, and its sequel, *The Return from Troy*, retells the voyage of Odysseus in a manner which combines myth with modern psychological insight.

Progressive metal band Symphony X have a song based on Odysseus's journey, and called "The Odyssey", on the album of the same name. At 24 minutes and 7 seconds long, it has a six-part orchestra playing in it, each part comprising about sixty musicians.

Irish poet Eilean Ni Chuilleanain wrote "The Second Voyage", a poem in which she makes use of the story of Odysseus.

A cartoon show named *Class of the Titans* has a character named 'Odie' who is a direct descendant of Odysseus. One of the episodes, "The Odie-sey", portrays the story of the *Odyssey*, with characters like Calypso, Scylla, and Aeolus, and also including modern twists.

Actor Kirk Douglas portrayed Odysseus in the Italian 1955 feature film *Ulysses*. Actor Sean Bean portrayed Odysseus in the feature film *Troy*. Actor Armand Assante played Odysseus in the TV miniseries *The Odyssey*. He had also been played by John Drew Barrymore in the 1961 film *The Trojan Horse* and by Piero Lulli in the 1962 film *The Fury of Achilles*.

Odysseus is also a character in David Gemmell's *Troy* trilogy, in which he is a good friend and mentor of Helikaon. He is known as the ugly king of Ithaka. His marriage with Penelope was arranged, but they grew to love each other. He is also a famous storyteller, known to exaggerate his stories and heralded as the greatest storyteller of his age. This is used as a plot device to explain the origins of such myths as those of Circe and the Gorgons. In the series, he is fairly old and an unwilling ally of Agamemnon.

In the second book of the Percy Jackson series, *The Sea of Monsters*, Percy and his friends encounter many obstacles similar to those in the *Odyssey*, including Scylla and Charybdis, the Sirens, Polyphemus, and others.

He is the hero of *The Luck of Troy* by Roger Lancelyn Green, whose title refers to the theft of the Palladium.

Tony Robinson's 1996 UK children's television series *Odysseus: The Greatest Hero of Them All* (sometimes listed as an episode in the *Jackanory* serial), comprised Robinson narrating the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, with most of the events maintained intact, but retold in modern language.

Comparative mythology

A similar story exists in Hindu mythology with Nala and Damayanti where Nala separates from Damayanti and is reunited with her.^[31] The story of stringing a bow is similar to the description in Ramayana of Rama stringing the bow to win Sita's hand in marriage.

"Odysseus himself was the only one who was able to strain his bow ... he beat his competitors and regained his wife after his long absence due to the Trojan War. We can discover the same theme ... for example in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata"

[32]

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Notes

- [1] Entry: Ὀδυσσεύς[[Category:Articles containing Ancient Greek language text (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0057:entry=#72123>)]] at Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, 1940, *A Greek-English Lexicon*.
- [2] Entry: ὀδύσσομαι ([http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0057:entry=o\)du/ssomai](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0057:entry=o)du/ssomai)) in Liddell & Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*
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External links

- "Archaeological discovery in Greece may be the tomb of Odysseus" from the *Madera Tribune* (<http://maderatribune.1871dev.com/news/newsview.asp?c=167178>)

Perseus

Perseus	
	
Abode	Argos
Symbol	Medusa's head
Consort	Andromeda
Parents	Zeus and Danae
Children	Perses, Heleus
Mount	Pegasus

Perseus (Ancient Greek: Περσεύς), the legendary founder of Mycenae and of the Perseid dynasty of Danaans there, was the first of the heroes of Greek mythology whose exploits in defeating various archaic monsters provided the founding myths of the Twelve Olympians. Perseus was the Greek hero who killed the Gorgon Medusa, and claimed Andromeda, having rescued her from a sea monster sent by Poseidon in retribution for Queen Cassiopeia declaring that her daughter, Andromeda, was more beautiful than the Nereids.

Etymology

Because of the obscurity of the name *Perseus* and the legendary character of its bearer, most etymologists pass it by, on the presumption that it might be pre-Greek; however, the name of Perseus' native city was Greek and so were the names of his wife and relatives. There is some prospect that it descended into Greek from the Proto-Indo-European language. In that regard Robert Graves has espoused the only Greek derivation available. Perseus might be from the ancient Greek verb, "πέρθειν" (*perthein*), "to waste, ravage, sack, destroy", some form of which appears in Homeric epithets. According to Carl Darling Buck (*Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin*), the *-eus* suffix is typically used to form an agent noun, in this case from the aorist stem, *pers-*. *Pers-eus* therefore is a sacker of cities; that is, a soldier by occupation, a fitting name for the first Mycenaean warrior.

The origin of *perth-* is more obscure. J. B. Hofmann lists the possible root as **bher-*, from which Latin *ferio*, "strike".^[1] This corresponds to Julius Pokorny's **bher-*(3), "scrape, cut." Ordinarily **bh-* descends to Greek as *ph-*. This difficulty can be overcome by presuming a dissimilation from the *-th-* in *perthein*; that is, the Greeks preferred not to say **phperthein*. Graves carries the meaning still further, to the *perse-* in Persephone, goddess of death. John Chadwick in the second edition of *Documents in Mycenaean Greek* speculates as follows about the goddess *pe-re*.*82 of Pylos tablet Tn 316, tentatively reconstructed as **Preswa*:

"It is tempting to see...the classical Perse...daughter of Oceanus...; whether it may be further identified with the first element of Persephone is only speculative."

A Greek folk etymology connected the name of the Persian (Pars) people, whom they called the Persai. The native name, however has always had an -a- in Persian. Herodotus^[2] recounts this story, devising a foreign son, Perses, from whom the Persians took the name. Apparently the Persians themselves^[3] knew the story, as Xerxes tried to use it to suborn the Argives during his invasion of Greece, but ultimately failed to do so.

Origin at Argos

Perseus was the son of Zeus and Danaë, who by her very name, was the archetype of all the Danaans.^[4] She was the only child of Acrisius, King of Argos. Disappointed by his lack of luck in having a son, Acrisius consulted the oracle at Delphi, who warned him that he would one day be killed by his daughter's son. Danaë was childless and to keep her so, he imprisoned her in a bronze chamber open to the sky in the courtyard of his palace.^[5] This mytheme is also connected to Ares, Oenopion, Eurystheus, etc. Zeus came to her in the form of a shower of gold, and impregnated her.^[6] Soon after, their child was born; Perseus — "*Perseus Eurymedon*,^[7] for his mother gave him this name as well" (Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* IV).

Fearful for his future but unwilling to provoke the wrath of the gods by killing Zeus's offspring and his own daughter, Acrisius cast the two into the sea in a wooden chest.^[8] Danaë's fearful prayer made while afloat in the darkness has been expressed by the poet Simonides of Ceos. Mother and child washed ashore on the island of Seriphos, where they were taken in by the fisherman Dictys ("fishing net"), who raised the boy to manhood. The brother of Dictys was Polydectes ("he who receives/welcomes many"), the king of the island.

Overcoming the Gorgon

When Perseus was grown, Polydectes came to fall in love with the beautiful Danaë. Perseus believed Polydectes was less than honourable, and protected his mother from him; thus Polydectes plotted to send Perseus away in disgrace. He held a large banquet where each guest was expected to bring a gift.^[9] Polydectes requested that the guests bring horses, under the pretense that he was collecting contributions for the hand of Hippodamia, "tamer of horses". The fisherman's protégé had no horse to give, so he asked Polydectes to name the gift; he would not refuse it. Polydectes held Perseus to his rash promise and demanded the head of the only mortal Gorgon,^[10] Medusa, whose eyes turned people to stone. Ovid's account of Medusa's mortality tells that she had once been a woman, vain of her beautiful hair, who had lain with Poseidon in the Temple of Athena.^[11] In punishment for the desecration of her temple, Athena had changed Medusa's hair into hideous snakes "that she may alarm her surprised foes with terror".^[12]



The Baleful Head (1887), part of a series of Perseus paintings by the Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones, playing with the theme of the reflected gaze



"Perseus with the head of Medusa" is a common subject for sculpture, here in an 1801 example by Antonio Canova

Athena instructed Perseus to find the Hesperides, who were entrusted with weapons needed to defeat the Gorgon. Following Athena's guidance,^[13] Perseus sought out the Graeae, sisters of the Gorgons, to demand the whereabouts of the Hesperides, the nymphs tending Hera's orchard. The Graeae were three perpetually old women, who had to share a single eye. As the women passed the eye from one to another, Perseus snatched it from them, holding it for ransom in return for the location of the nymphs.^[14] When the sisters led him to the Hesperides, he returned what he had taken.

From the Hesperides he received a knapsack (*kibisis*) to safely contain Medusa's head. Zeus gave him an adamantine sword and Hades' helm of darkness to hide. Hermes lent Perseus winged sandals to fly, while Athena gave him a polished shield. Perseus then proceeded to the Gorgons' cave.

In the cave he came upon the sleeping Medusa. By viewing Medusa's reflection in his polished shield, he safely approached and cut off her head. From her neck sprang Pegasus ("he who sprang") and Chrysaor ("bow of gold"), the result of

Poseidon and Medusa's meeting. The other two Gorgons pursued Perseus,^[15] but, wearing his helm of darkness, he escaped.

Marriage to Andromeda

On the way back to Seriphos Island, Perseus stopped in the kingdom of Ethiopia. This mythical Ethiopia was ruled by King Cepheus and Queen Cassiopeia. Cassiopeia, having boasted herself equal in beauty to the Nereids, drew down the vengeance of Poseidon, who sent an inundation on the land and a sea serpent, Cetus, which destroyed man and beast. The oracle of Ammon announced that no relief would be found until the king exposed his daughter Andromeda to the monster, and so she was fastened to a rock on the shore. Perseus slew the monster and, setting her free, claimed her in marriage.

In the classical myth, he flew using the flying sandals. Renaissance Europe and modern imagery has generated the idea that Perseus flew mounted on Pegasus (though not in the paintings by Piero di Cosimo and Titian).^[16]

Perseus married Andromeda in spite of Phineus, to whom she had before been promised. At the wedding a quarrel took place between the rivals, and Phineus was turned to stone by the sight of Medusa's head that Perseus had kept.^[17] Andromeda ("queen of men") followed her husband to Tiryns in Argos, and became the ancestress of the family of the Perseidae who ruled at Tiryns through her son with Perseus, Perses.^[18] After her death she was placed by Athena amongst the constellations in the northern sky, near Perseus and Cassiopeia.^[19] Sophocles and Euripides (and in more modern times Pierre Corneille) made the episode of Perseus and Andromeda the subject of tragedies, and its incidents were represented in many ancient works of art.

As Perseus was flying in his return above the sands of Libya, according to Apollonius of Rhodes,^[20] the falling drops of Medusa's blood created a race of toxic serpents, one of whom was to kill the Argonaut Mopsus. On returning to Seriphos and discovering that his mother had to take refuge from the violent advances of Polydectes,



Perseus and Andromeda.

Perseus killed him with Medusa's head, and made his brother Dictys, consort of Danaë, king.

The oracle fulfilled



Perseus frees Andromeda (detail), by Piero di Cosimo, 1515 (Uffizi)

Perseus then returned his magical loans and gave Medusa's head as a votive gift to Athena, who set it on Zeus' shield (which she carried), as the *Gorgoneion* (see also: Aegis).

The fulfillment of the oracle^[21] was told several ways, each incorporating the mythic theme of exile. In Pausanias^[22] he did not return to Argos, but went instead to Larissa, where athletic games were being held.

He had just invented the quoit and was making a public display of them when Acrisius, who happened to be visiting, stepped into the trajectory of the quoit and was killed: thus the oracle was fulfilled. This is an unusual variant on the story of such a prophecy, as Acrisius' actions did not, in this variant, cause his death.

In the *Bibliotheca*,^[23] the inevitable occurred by another route: Perseus did return to Argos, but when he learned of the oracle, went into voluntary exile in Pelasgiotis (Thessaly). There Teutamides, king of Larissa, was holding funeral games for his father. Competing in the

discus throw Perseus' throw veered and struck Acrisius, killing him instantly.

In a third tradition,^[24] Acrisius had been driven into exile by his brother, Proetus. Perseus turned the brother into stone with the Gorgon's head and restored Acrisius to the throne. Having killed Acrisius, Perseus, who was next in line for the throne, gave the kingdom to Megapenthes ("great mourning") son of Proetus and took over Megapenthes' kingdom of Tiryns. The story is related in Pausanias,^[25] which gives as motivation for the swap that Perseus was ashamed to become king of Argos by inflicting death.

In any case, early Greek literature reiterates that manslaughter, even involuntary, requires the exile of the slaughterer, expiation and ritual purification. The exchange might well have been a creative solution to a difficult problem; however, Megapenthes would have been required to avenge his father, which, in legend, he did, but only at the end of Perseus' long and successful reign.

King of Mycenae

The two main sources regarding the legendary life of Perseus—for he was an authentic historical figure to the Greeks—are Pausanias and the *Bibliotheca*, but from them we obtain mainly folk-etymology concerning the founding of Mycenae. Pausanias^[26] asserts that the Greeks believed Perseus founded Mycenae. He mentions the shrine to Perseus that stood on the left-hand side of the road from Mycenae to Argos, and also a sacred fountain at Mycenae called *Persea*. Located outside the walls, this was perhaps the spring that filled the citadel's underground cistern. He states also that Atreus stored his treasures in an underground chamber there, which is why Heinrich Schliemann named the largest tholos tomb the Treasury of Atreus.



Perseus rescuing Andromeda from Cetus, depicted on an amphora in the Altes Museum, Berlin

Apart from these more historical references, we have only folk-etymology: Perseus dropped his cap or found a mushroom (both named *myces*) at Mycenae, or perhaps the place was named from the lady Mycene, daughter of Inachus, mentioned in a now-fragmentary poem, the *Megalai Ehoiai*.^[27] For whatever reasons, perhaps as outposts, Perseus *fortified* Mycenae according to Apollodorus^[28] along with Midea, an action that implies that they both previously existed. It is unlikely, however, that Apollodorus knew who walled in Mycenae; he was only conjecturing. In any case, Perseus took up official residence in Mycenae with Andromeda.

Descendants of Perseus



Perseus and the head of Medusa in a Roman fresco at Stabiae

Perseus and Andromeda had seven sons: Perses, Alcaeus, Heleus, Mestor, Sthenelus, Electryon, and Cynurus, and two daughters, Gorgophone, and Autochthe. Perses was left in Aethiopia and became an ancestor of the Persians. The other descendants ruled Mycenae from Electryon down to Eurystheus, after whom Atreus got the kingdom. However, the Perseids included the great hero, Heracles, stepson of Amphitryon, son of Alcaeus. The Heraclides, or descendants of Heracles, successfully contested the rule of the Atreids.

A statement by the Athenian orator, Isocrates^[29] helps to date Perseus roughly. He said that Heracles was four generations later than Perseus, which corresponds to the legendary succession: Perseus, Electryon,

Alcmena, and Heracles, who was a contemporary of Eurystheus. Atreus was one generation later, a total of five generations.

Perseus on Pegasus

The replacement of Bellerophon as the tamer and rider of Pegasus by the more familiar culture hero Perseus was not simply an error of painters and poets of the Renaissance. The transition was a development of Classical times which became the standard image during the Middle Ages and has been adopted by the European poets of the Renaissance and later: Giovanni Boccaccio's *Genealogia deorum gentilium libri* (10.27) identifies Pegasus as the steed of Perseus, and Pierre Corneille places Perseus upon Pegasus in *Andromède*.^[30] Modern representations of this image include sculptor Émile Louis Picault's 1888 sculpture, *Pegasus*.

Modern uses of the theme and pop culture

In Hermann Melville's *Moby-Dick*, the narrator asserts that Perseus was the first whaleman, when he killed Cetus to save Andromeda.^[31] Operatic treatments of the subject include *Persée* by Lully (1682) and *Persée et Andromède* by Ibert (1921).

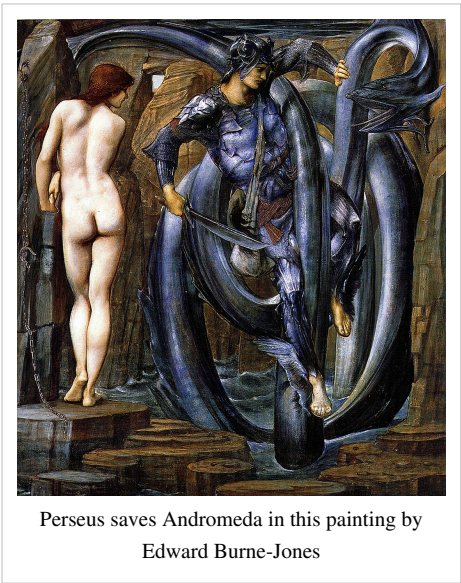
Chimera, the 1972 National Book Award-winning novel by John Barth, includes a novella called *Perseid* that is an inventive, postmodern retelling of the myth of Perseus.

In Rick Riordan's fantasy series *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* (2005–2009), the protagonist Percy Jackson, a son of Poseidon, is named after Perseus.

In film, the myth of Perseus was loosely adapted numerous times. The first being the 1963 Italian film *Perseus The Invincible* (which was dubbed and released to the U.S as *Medusa Against The Son of Hercules* in 1964). The second was the 1981 fantasy/adventure film *Clash of the Titans*, and the third was that film's 2010 remake *Clash of the Titans*, which was followed by a sequel called *Wrath of the Titans* in 2012.

Perseus was also featured in comics. Outside of a comic book adaptation of the 1981 *Clash of the Titans* film published by Western Publishing^[32] and a graphic novel called *Perseus: Destiny's Call* published in 2012 by Campfire Books,^[33] the story of Perseus continued in a couple of comic book series from Bluewater Comics. The first was the 2007 miniseries *Wrath of the Titans*,^[34] (which also spawned a one-shot comic called *Wrath of the Titans: Cyclops*),^[35] while the second is the 2011 miniseries *Wrath of the Titans: Revenge of Medusa*.^[36]

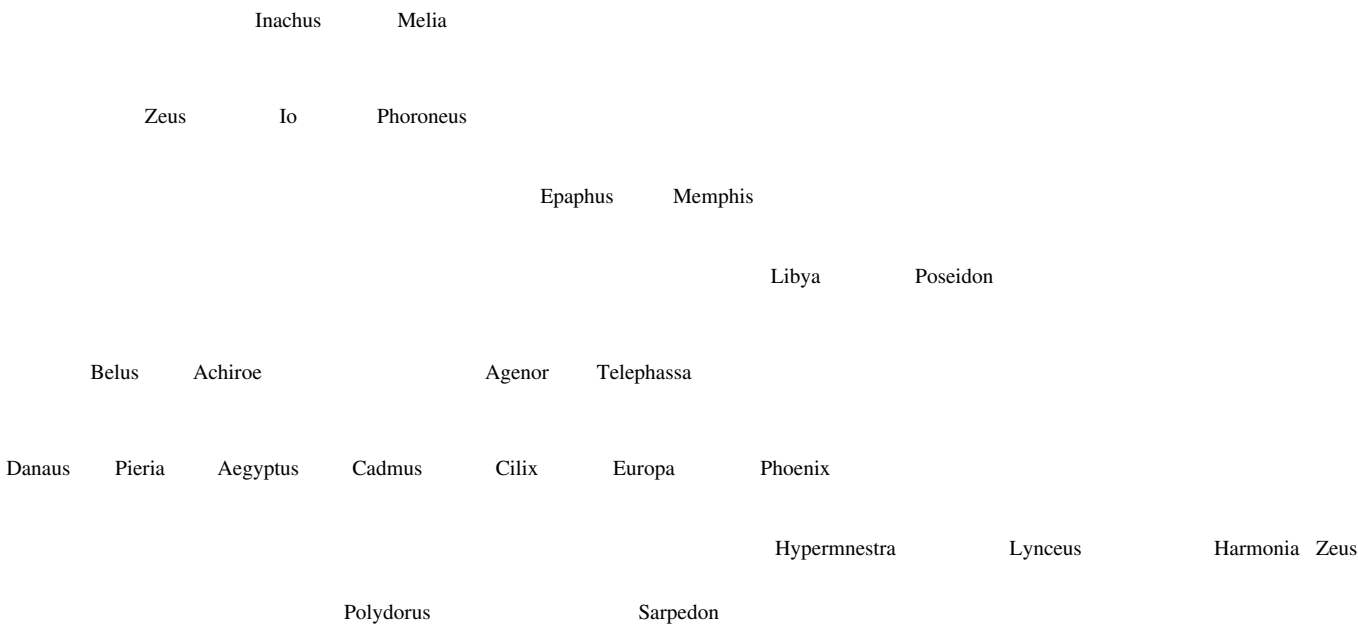
In Masami Kurumada's *Saint Seiya* comic book, which is inspired by Greek myths, the character Perseus Algol is one of the warriors known as the Saints of Athena, and he wears an armor known as the Perseus Cloth, which represents the mythological figure and also his constellation.



Perseus saves Andromeda in this painting by Edward Burne-Jones

Argive genealogy in Greek mythology

Argive genealogy in Greek mythology



Abas	Agave	Rhadamanthus		
	Autonoë			
Acrisius	Ino	Minos		
	Zeus	Danaë	Semele	Zeus
		Perseus		Dionysus

Notes

- [1] Hofmann, J. B. (1950). *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Griechischen*. Munich: R. Oldenbourg.
- [2] Herodotus, vii.61
- [3] Herodotus vii.150
- [4] Kerenyi, Karl (1959). *The Heroes of the Greeks*. London: Thames and Hudson. p. 45. See also Danaus, the eponymous ancestor.
- [5] "Even thus endured Danaë in her beauty to change the light of day for brass-bound walls; and in that chamber, secret as the grave, she was held close" (Sophocles, *Antigone*). In post-Renaissance paintings the setting is often a locked tower.
- [6] Trzaskoma, Stephen; et al (2004). *Anthology of classical myth: primary sources in translation*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett. ISBN 978-0-87220-721-9.
- [7] *Eurymedon*: "far-ruling"
- [8] For the familiar motif of the Exposed Child in the account of Moses especially, see Childs, Brevard S. (1965). "The Birth of Moses". *Journal of Biblical Literature* **84** (2): 109–122. JSTOR 3264132. And Redford, Donald B. (1967). "The Literary Motif of the Exposed Child (Cf. Ex. ii 1-10)". *Numen* **14** (3): 209–228. doi:10.2307/3269606. Another example of this mytheme is the Indian figure of Karna.
- [9] Such a banquet, to which each guest brings a gift, was an *eranos*. The name of *Polydectes*, "receiver of many", characterizes his role as intended host but is also a euphemism for the Lord of the Underworld, as in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter 9, 17.
- [10] Hesiod, *Theogony* 277
- [11] Ovid, as a Roman writer, uses the Roman names for Poseidon and Athena, "Neptune" and "Minerva" respectively.
- [12] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* iv, 792-802, Henry Thomas Riley's translation
- [13] "The Myth of Perseus and Medusa", obtained from <http://www.arthistory.sbc.edu/imageswomen/papers/kottkegorgon/gorgonmyth.html>
- [14] "PERSEUS : Hero ; Greek mythology" obtained from <http://www.theoi.com/Heros/Perseus.html>
- [15] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliothēke* 2. 37-39.
- [16] For the Greeks, the tamer and first rider of Pegasus was Bellerophon
- [17] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.1-235.
- [18] Perseus and Andromeda had seven sons: Perseides, Perses, Alcaeus, Heleus, Mestor, Sthenelus, and Electryon, and one daughter, Gorgophone. Their descendants also ruled Mycenae, from Electryon down to Eurystheus, after whom Atreus attained the kingdom. Among the Perseids was the great hero Heracles. According to this mythology, Perseus is the ancestor of the Persians.
- [19] *Catasterismi*.
- [20] *Argonautica*, IV.
- [21] The ironic fulfillment of an oracle through an accident or a concatenation of coincidental circumstances is not a "self-fulfilling prophecy".
- [22] Pausanias, 2.16.2 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Paus.+2.16.2>)
- [23] 2.4.4
- [24] *Metamorphoses*, 5.177
- [25] Pausanias, 2.16.3 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Paus.+2.16.3>)
- [26] 2.15.4, 2.16.3-6, 2.18.1
- [27] Hesiod, *Megalai Ehoiai* fr. 246.
- [28] 2.4.4, *pros-teichisas*, "walling in"
- [29] 4.07
- [30] Johnston, George Burke (1955). "Jonson's 'Perseus upon Pegasus'". *The Review of English Studies*. New Series **6** (21): 65–67. doi:10.1093/res/VI.21.65. JSTOR 510816.
- [31] Melville, Hermann (1851), *Moby-Dick*. Chapter 82: *The Honor and Glory of Whaling*
- [32] *Clash of the Titans* (<http://www.comics.org/series/2591/>), Grand Comics Database, accessed June 28, 2011.
- [33] <http://campfiregraphicnovels.wordpress.com/2012/01/12/perseus-destinys-call/>
- [34] *Wrath of the Titans* (<http://www.comics.org/series/27950/>), Grand Comics Database, accessed June 28, 2011.
- [35] *Wrath of the Titans: Cyclops* (<http://www.comics.org/series/34938/>), Grand Comics Database, accessed June 28, 2011.
- [36] *Wrath of the Titans: Revenge of Medusa* (<http://www.comics.org/series/59274/>), Grand Comics Database, accessed June 28, 2011.

References

Jason

Jason (Ancient Greek: Ἰάσων, *Iásōn*) was an ancient Greek mythological hero who was famous for his role as the leader of the Argonauts and their quest for the Golden Fleece. He was the son of Aeson, the rightful king of Iolcos. He was married to the sorceress Medea.

Jason appeared in various literature in the classical world of Greece and Rome, including the epic poem *Argonautica* and tragedy, *Medea*. In the modern world, Jason has emerged as a character in various adaptations of his myths, such as the 1963 film *Jason and the Argonauts* and the 2000 TV miniseries of the same name.

Jason has connections outside of the classical world, as he is seen as being the mythical founder of the city of Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia.



Jason landing in Colchis - as depicted in a 17th century painting.

Early years

Family

Jason's father is invariably Aeson, but there is great variation as to his mother's name. According to various authors, she could be:

- Alcimedea, daughter of Phylacus^{[1][2][3]}
- Polymede,^{[4][5]} or Polymele,^{[6][7]} or Polypheme,^[8] a daughter of Autolycus
- Amphinome^[9]
- Theognete, daughter of Laodicus^[8]
- Rhoeo^[6]
- Arne or Scarphe^[10]

Jason was also said to have had a younger brother Promachus^[9] and a sister Hippolyte, who married Acastus^[11] (see Astydameia).

Prosecution by Pelias

Pelias (Aeson's half-brother) was very power-hungry, and he wished to gain dominion over all of Thessaly. Pelias was the product of a union between their shared mother, Tyro ("high born Tyro") the daughter of Salmoneus, and allegedly the sea god Poseidon. In a bitter feud, he overthrew Aeson (the rightful king), killing all the descendants of Aeson that he could. He spared his half-brother for unknown reasons. Alcimedea I (wife of Aeson) already had an infant son named Jason whom she saved from being killed by Pelias, by having women cluster around the newborn and cry as if he were still-born. Alcimedea sent her son to the centaur Chiron for education, for fear that Pelias would kill him — she claimed that she had been having an affair with him all along. Pelias, still fearful that he would one day be overthrown, consulted an oracle which warned him to beware of a man with one sandal.

Many years later, Pelias was holding games in honor of the sea god and his alleged father, Poseidon, when Jason arrived in Iolcus and lost one of his sandals in the river Anauros ("wintry Anauros"), while helping an old woman to cross (the Goddess Hera in disguise). She blessed him for she knew, as goddesses do, what Pelias had up his sleeve. When Jason entered Iolcus (modern-day city of Volos), he was announced as a man wearing one sandal. Jason,

knowing that he was the rightful king, told Pelias that and Pelias said, "To take my throne, which you shall, you must go on a quest to find the Golden Fleece." Jason happily accepted the quest.

The Quest for the Golden Fleece

Jason assembled a great group of heroes, known as the Argonauts after their ship, the *Argo*. The group of heroes included the Boreads (sons of Boreas, the North Wind) who could fly, Heracles, Philoctetes, Peleus, Telamon, Orpheus, Castor and Pollux, Atalanta, and Euphemus.

The Isle of Lemnos

The isle of Lemnos is situated off the Western coast of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). The island was inhabited by a race of women who had killed their husbands. The women had neglected their worship of Aphrodite, and as a punishment the goddess made the women so foul in stench that their husbands could not bear to be near them. The men then took concubines from the Thracian mainland opposite, and the spurned women, angry at Aphrodite, killed all the male inhabitants while they slept. The king, Thoas, was saved by Hypsipyle, his daughter, who put him out to sea sealed in a chest from which he was later rescued. The women of Lemnos lived for a while without men, with Hypsipyle as their queen.

During the visit of the Argonauts the women mingled with the men creating a new "race" called Minyae. Jason fathered twins with the queen. Heracles pressured them to leave as he was disgusted by the antics of the Argonauts. He had not taken part, which is truly unusual considering the numerous affairs he had with other women. ^[12]

Cyzicus

After Lemnos the Argonauts landed among the Doliones, whose king Cyzicus treated them graciously. He told them about the land beyond Bear Mountain, but forgot to mention what lived there. What lived in the land beyond Bear Mountain were the Gegeines which are a tribe of Earthborn giants with six arms and wore leather loincloths. While most of the crew went into the forest to search for supplies, the Gegeines saw that a few Argonauts were guarding the ship and raided it. Heracles was among those guarding the ship at the time and managed to kill most of them until Jason and the others returned. Once some of the other Gegeines were killed, Jason and the Argonauts set sail.

Sometime after their fight with the Gegeines, they sent some men to find food and water. Among these men was Heracles' servant Hylas who was gathering water while Heracles was out finding some wood to carve a new oar to replace the one that broke. The nymphs of the stream where Hylas was collecting were attracted to his good looks, and pulled him into the stream. Heracles returned to his Labors, but Hylas was lost forever. Others say that Heracles went to Colchis with the Argonauts, got the Golden Girdle of the Amazons and slew the Stymphalian Birds at that time.

The Argonauts departed, losing their bearings and landing again at the same spot that night. In the darkness, the Doliones took them for enemies and they started fighting each other. The Argonauts killed many of the Doliones,



Jason bringing Pelias the Golden Fleece, Apulian red-figure calyx krater, ca. 340 BC–330 BC, Louvre

among them the king Cyzicus. Cyzicus' wife killed herself. The Argonauts realized their horrible mistake when dawn came and held a funeral for him.

Phineas and the Harpies

Soon Jason reached the court of Phineus of Salmydessus in Thrace. Zeus had sent the Harpies to steal the food put out for Phineas each day. Jason took pity on the emaciated king and killed the Harpies when they returned; in other versions, Calais and Zetes chase the Harpies away. In return for this favor, Phineas revealed to Jason the location of Colchis and how to pass the Symplegades, or The Clashing Rocks, and then they parted.

The Symplegades

The only way to reach Colchis was to sail through the Symplegades (Clashing Rocks), huge rock cliffs that came together and crushed anything that traveled between them. Phineas told Jason to release a dove when they approached these islands, and if the dove made it through, to row with all their might. If the dove was crushed, he was doomed to fail. Jason released the dove as advised, which made it through, losing only a few tail feathers. Seeing this, they rowed strongly and made it through with minor damage at the extreme stern of the ship. From that time on, the clashing rocks were forever joined leaving free passage for others to pass.

The arrival in Colchis

Jason arrived in Colchis (modern Black Sea coast of Georgia) to claim the fleece as his own. It was owned by King Aeetes of Colchis. The fleece was given to him by Phrixus. Aeetes promised to give it to Jason only if he could perform three certain tasks. Presented with the tasks, Jason became discouraged and fell into depression. However, Hera had persuaded Aphrodite to convince her son Eros to make Aeetes's daughter, Medea, fall in love with Jason. As a result, Medea aided Jason in his tasks. First, Jason had to plow a field with fire-breathing oxen, the Khalkotauroi, that he had to yoke himself. Medea provided an ointment that protected him from the oxen's flames. Then, Jason sowed the teeth of a dragon into a field. The teeth sprouted into an army of warriors. Medea had previously warned Jason of this and told him how to defeat this foe. Before they attacked him, he threw a rock into the crowd. Unable to discover where the rock



Jason and the Snake

had come from, the soldiers attacked and defeated one another. His last task was to overcome the sleepless dragon which guarded the Golden Fleece. Jason sprayed the dragon with a potion, given by Medea, distilled from herbs. The dragon fell asleep, and Jason was able to seize the Golden Fleece. He then sailed away with Medea. Medea distracted her father, who chased them as they fled, by killing her brother Apsyrtus and throwing pieces of his body into the sea; Aeetes stopped to gather them. In another version, Medea lured Apsyrtus into a trap. Jason killed him, chopped off his fingers and toes, and buried the corpse. In any case, Jason and Medea escaped.

The return journey

On the way back to Iolcus, Medea prophesied to Euphemus, the *Argo's* helmsman, that one day he would rule Cyrene. This came true through Battus, a descendant of Euphemus. Zeus, as punishment for the slaughter of Medea's own brother, sent a series of storms at the *Argo* and blew it off course. The *Argo* then spoke and said that they should seek purification with Circe, a nymph living on the island of Aeaea. After being cleansed, they continued their journey home.

Sirens

Chiron had told Jason that without the aid of Orpheus, the Argonauts would never be able to pass the Sirens — the same Sirens encountered by Odysseus in Homer's epic poem the *Odyssey*. The Sirens lived on three small, rocky islands called Sirenum scopuli and sang beautiful songs that enticed sailors to come to them, which resulted in the crashing of their ship into the islands. When Orpheus heard their voices, he drew his lyre and played music that was more beautiful and louder, drowning out the Sirens' bewitching songs.

Talos

The *Argo* then came to the island of Crete, guarded by the bronze man, Talos. As the ship approached, Talos hurled huge stones at the ship, keeping it at bay. Talos had one blood vessel which went from his neck to his ankle, bound shut by only one bronze nail (as in metal casting by the lost wax method). Medea cast a spell on Talos to calm him; she removed the bronze nail and Talos bled to death. The *Argo* was then able to sail on.

Jason returns

Medea, using her sorcery, claimed to Pelias' daughters that she could make their father younger by chopping him up into pieces and boiling the pieces in a cauldron of water and magical herbs. She demonstrated this remarkable feat with a sheep, which leapt out of the cauldron as a lamb. The girls, rather naively, sliced and diced their father and put him in the cauldron. Medea did not add the magical herbs, and Pelias was dead.

It should be noted that Thomas Bulfinch has an antecedent to the interaction of Medea and the daughters of Pelias. Jason, celebrating his return with the Golden Fleece, noted that his father was too aged and infirm to participate in the celebrations. He had seen and been served by Medea's magical powers. He asked Medea to take some years from his life and add them to the life of his father. She did so, but at no such cost to Jason's life. Pelias' daughters saw this and wanted the same service for their father. Pelias' son, Acastus, drove Jason and Medea into exile for the murder, and the couple settled in Corinth.

Treachery of Jason

In Corinth, Jason became engaged to marry Creusa (sometimes referred to as Glauce), a daughter of the King of Corinth, to strengthen his political ties. When Medea confronted Jason about the engagement and cited all the help she had given him, he retorted that it was not she that he should thank, but Aphrodite who made Medea fall in love with him. Infuriated with Jason for breaking his vow that he would be hers forever, Medea took her revenge by presenting to Creusa a cursed dress, as a wedding gift, that stuck to her body and burned her to death as soon as she put it on. Creusa's father, Creon, burned to death with his daughter as he tried to save her. Then Medea killed the two boys that she bore to Jason, fearing that they would be murdered or enslaved as a result of their mother's actions. When Jason came to know of this, Medea was already gone; she fled to Athens in a chariot sent by her grandfather, the sun-god Helios.

Later Jason and Peleus, father of the hero Achilles, attacked and defeated Acastus, reclaiming the throne of Iolcus for himself once more. Jason's son, Thessalus, then became king.

As a result of breaking his vow to love Medea forever, Jason lost his favor with Hera and died lonely and unhappy. He was asleep under the stern of the rotting *Argo* when it fell on him, killing him instantly.

In literature

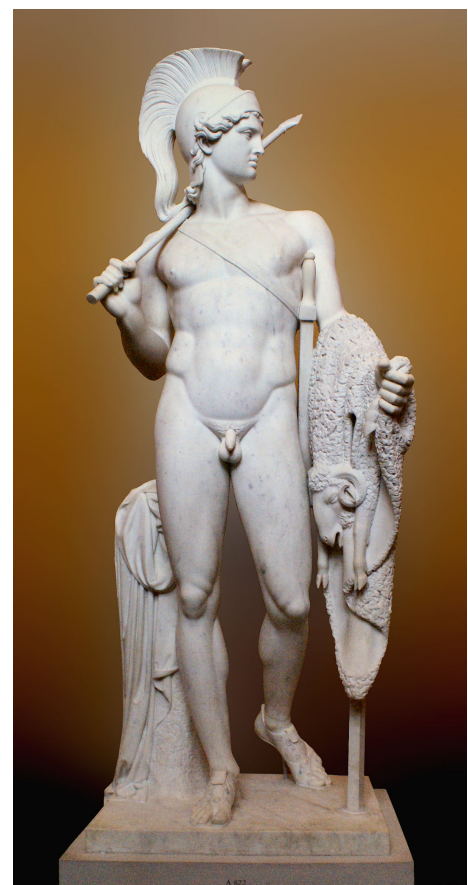
Though some of the episodes of Jason's story draw on ancient material, the definitive telling, on which this account relies, is that of Apollonius of Rhodes in his epic poem *Argonautica*, written in Alexandria in the late 3rd century BC.

Another *Argonautica* was written by Gaius Valerius Flaccus in the late 1st century AD, eight books in length. The poem ends abruptly with the request of Medea to accompany Jason on his homeward voyage. It is unclear if part of the epic poem has been lost, or if it was never finished. A third version is the *Argonautica Orphica*, which emphasizes the role of Orpheus in the story.

Jason is briefly mentioned in Dante's *Divine Comedy* in the poem *Inferno*. He appears in the Canto XVIII. In it, he is seen by Dante and his guide Virgil being punished in Hell's Eighth Circle (Bolgia 1) by being driven to march through the circle for all eternity while being whipped by devils. He is included among the panderers and seducers (possibly for his seduction and subsequent abandoning of Medea).

The story of Medea's revenge on Jason is told with devastating effect by Euripides in his tragedy *Medea*.

The mythical geography of the voyage of the Argonauts has been connected to specific geographic locations by Livio Stecchini^[13] but his theories have not been widely adopted.



Jason with the Golden Fleece, Bertel Thorvaldsen's first masterpiece.

Popular culture

Jason appeared in the *Hercules* episode "Hercules and the Argonauts" voiced by William Shatner. He is shown to have been a student of Philoctetes and takes his advice to let Hercules travel with him.

In *The Heroes of Olympus* story "The Lost Hero," there was a reference to the mythical Jason when Jason Grace and his friends encounter Medea.

Notes

[1] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 1. 45 ff, 233, 251 ff

[2] Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 3, 13, 14

[3] Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, 1. 297

[4] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, 1. 9. 16

[5] Tzetzes on Lycophron, 175 & 872

[6] Tzetzes, *Chiliades*, 6. 979

[7] Scholia on Homer, *Odyssey*, 12. 69

[8] Scholia on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 1. 45

[9] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 4. 50. 2

[10] Tzetzes on Lycophron, 872

[11] Scholia on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 1. 287

[12] Note: In "Hercules, My Shipmate" Robert Graves claims that Heracles fathered more children than anyone else of the crew.

[13] The Voyage of the Argo (<http://www.metrum.org/mapping/argo.htm>)

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Notes

External links

- Timeless Myths - Argonauts (<http://www.timelessmyths.com/classical/argonauts.html>), a summary of Jason and his Quest for the Golden Fleece
- *Argonautica* (<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/830>) at Project Gutenberg

Oedipus

Oedipus (US ⓘ /ˈɛdɪpəs/ or UK /ˈiːdɪpəs/; Ancient Greek: Οἰδίπους *Oidípous* meaning "swollen foot") was a mythical Greek king of Thebes. He fulfilled a prophecy that said he would kill his father and marry his mother, and thereby brought disaster on his city and family. This legend has been retold in many versions, and was used by Sigmund Freud to name the Oedipus complex.

Basics of the myth

There are many different versions of the legend of Oedipus due to its oral tradition. Significant variations on the legend of Oedipus are mentioned in fragments by several ancient Greek poets including Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Aeschylus and Euripides. However, the most popular version of the legend comes from the set of Theban plays by Sophocles: *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*.

Oedipus was the son of Laius and Jocasta, king and queen of Thebes.



Oedipus explains the riddle of the Sphinx, by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, c. 1805

After having been married some time without children, Laius consulted the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi. The Oracle prophesied that any son born to Laius would kill him. In an attempt to prevent this prophecy's fulfillment, when

Jocasta indeed bore a son, Laius had his ankles pinned together so that he could not crawl; Jocasta then gave the boy to a servant to abandon ("expose") on the nearby mountain. However, rather than leave the child to die of exposure, as Laius intended, the sympathetic servant passed the baby onto a shepherd from Corinth and then to another shepherd.

Oedipus the infant eventually came to the house of Polybus, king of Corinth and his queen, Merope, who adopted him as they were without children of their own. Little Oedipus/Oidipous was named after the swelling from the injuries to his feet and ankles. The word "oedema" (British English) or "edema" (American English) is from this same Greek word for swelling: *οἰδημα*, or *oedēma*.

After many years of being son of the king and queen of Corinth, Oedipus was told by a drunk that he had in fact been adopted by them. Oedipus confronted his parents with the news, but they denied every word. Oedipus sent word for the same Oracle in Delphi his birth parents consulted. The Oracle did not tell him he was son of the king and queen of Thebes, but instead informed him he was destined to murder his father and marry his mother. In his attempt to avoid the fate predicted by the Oracle, he decided to not return home to Corinth. Oedipus decided to travel all the way to Thebes, as it was near Delphi.

As Oedipus traveled, he came to Davlia, where three roads crossed each other. There he encountered a chariot driven by his birth-father, King Laius. They fought over who had the right to go first and Oedipus killed Laius in self defense, unwittingly fulfilling part of the prophecy. The only witness of the King's death was a slave who fled from a caravan of slaves also traveling on the road at the time.

Continuing his journey to Thebes, Oedipus encountered a Sphinx, who would stop all travelers to Thebes and ask them a riddle. If the travelers were unable to answer her correctly, they would be killed and eaten; if they were successful, they would be free to continue on their journey. The riddle was: "What walks on four feet in the morning, two in the afternoon and three at night?". Oedipus answered: "Man: as an infant, he crawls on all fours; as an adult, he walks on two legs and; in old age, he uses a 'walking' stick". Oedipus was the first to answer the riddle correctly and, having heard Oedipus' answer, the Sphinx was astounded and inexplicably killed herself by throwing herself into the sea, freeing Thebes from her harsh rule.

The people of Thebes gratefully appointed Oedipus as their king and gave him the recently widowed Queen Jocasta's hand in marriage. The marriage of Oedipus to Jocasta fulfilled the rest of the prophecy. Oedipus and Jocasta had four children: two sons, Eteocles and Polynices (see *Seven Against Thebes*), and two daughters, Antigone and Ismene.

Many years after the marriage of Oedipus and Jocasta, a plague of infertility struck the city of Thebes; crops no longer grew on the fields and women did not bear children. Oedipus, in his hubris, asserted that he would end the pestilence. He sent Creon, Jocasta's brother, to the Oracle at Delphi, seeking guidance. When Creon returned, Oedipus heard that the murderer of the former King Laius must be found and either be killed or exiled. Creon also suggested that they try to find the blind prophet, Tiresias. In a search for the identity of the killer, Oedipus followed Creon's suggestion and sent for Tiresias, who warned him not to seek Laius' killer. In a heated exchange, Tiresias was provoked into exposing Oedipus himself as the killer, and the fact that Oedipus was living in shame because he did not know who his true parents were. Oedipus angrily blamed Creon for the false accusations, and the two proceeded to argue fervently. Jocasta entered and tried to calm Oedipus by telling him the story of her first-born son and his supposed death. Oedipus became nervous as he realized that he may have murdered Laius and so brought about the plague. Suddenly, a messenger arrived from Corinth with the news that King Polybus had died. Oedipus was relieved concerning the prophecy for it could no longer be fulfilled if Polybus, whom he considered his birth father, was now dead.

Still, he knew that his mother was still alive and refused to attend the funeral at Corinth. To ease the tension, the messenger then said that Oedipus was, in fact, adopted. Jocasta, finally realizing that he was her son, begged him to stop his search for Laius' murderer. Oedipus misunderstood the motivation of her pleas, thinking that she was ashamed of him because he might have been born of a slave. Jocasta then went into the palace where she hanged herself. Oedipus sought verification of the messenger's story from the very same herdsman who was supposed to


have left Oedipus to die as a baby. From the herdsman, Oedipus learned that the infant raised as the adopted son of Polybus and Merope was the son of Laius and Jocasta. Thus, Oedipus finally realized in great agony that so many years ago, at the place where the three roads met, he had killed his own father, King Laius, and subsequently married his mother, Jocasta.

Events after the revelation depend on the source. In Sophocles' plays, Oedipus went in search of Jocasta and found she had killed herself. Using the pin from a brooch he took off Jocasta's gown, Oedipus stabbed his own eyes out, and was then exiled. His daughter Antigone acted as his guide as he wandered blindly through the country, finally perishing at Colonus after being placed under the protection of Athens by King Theseus. However, in Euripides' plays on the subject, Jocasta did not kill herself upon learning of Oedipus' birth, and Oedipus was blinded by a servant of Laius. The blinding of Oedipus does not appear in sources earlier than Aeschylus. Some older sources of the myth, including Homer, state that Oedipus continued to rule Thebes after the revelations and after Jocasta's death.

Oedipus' two sons, Eteocles and Polynices, arranged to share the kingdom, each taking an alternating one-year reign. However, Eteocles refused to cede his throne after his year as king. Polynices brought in an army to oust Eteocles from his position and a battle ensued. At the end of the battle the brothers killed each other after which Jocasta's brother, Creon, took the throne. He decided that Polynices was a "traitor," and should not be given burial rites. Defying this edict, Antigone attempted to bury her brother. In Sophocles' *Antigone*, Creon had her buried in a rock cavern for defying him, whereupon she hanged herself. However, in Euripides' lost version of the story, it appears that Antigone survives.

5th century BC

Lekythos



Oedipus slaying the sphinx

Material	Pottery, gold
Created	420BC-400BC
Period/culture	Attic
Place	Polis-tis-Chrysokhou, tomb, Cyprus
Present location	Room 72, British Museum
Identification	1887,0801.46 ^[1]

Most writing on Oedipus comes from the 5th century BC, though the stories deal mostly with Oedipus' downfall. Various details appear on how Oedipus rose to power.

Laius hears of a prophecy that his son will kill him.^[2] Fearing the prophecy, Laius pierces Oedipus' feet and leaves him out to die, but a herdsman finds him and takes him away from Thebes.^[3] Oedipus, not knowing he was adopted, leaves home in fear of the same prophecy that he will kill his father and marry his mother.^[4] Laius, meanwhile,

ventures out to find a solution to the Sphinx's riddle.^[5] As prophesied, Oedipus crosses paths with Laius and this leads to a fight where Oedipus slays Laius and most of his guards.^[6] Oedipus then defeats the Sphinx by solving a mysterious riddle to become king.^[7] He marries the widow queen Jocasta not knowing she is his mother. A plague falls on the people of Thebes. Upon discovery of the truth, Oedipus blinds himself and Jocasta hangs herself.^[8] After Oedipus is no longer king, Oedipus' sons kill each other.

Some differences with older stories emerge. The curse of the Oedipus' sons is expanded backward to include Oedipus and his father, Laius. Oedipus now steps down from the throne instead of dying in battle. Additionally, rather than his children being by a second wife, Oedipus' children are now by Jocasta.

Pindar's Second Olympian Ode

In the Second Olympians Ode Pindar wrote: *Laius' tragic son, crossing his father's path, killed him and fulfilled the oracle spoken of old at Pytho. And sharp-eyed Erinys saw and slew his warlike children at each other's hands. Yet Thersandros survived fallen Polyneikes and won honor in youthful contests and the brunt of war, a scion of aid to the house of Adrastus.*^[9]

Aeschylus' Oedipus trilogy

In 467 BC the Athenian playwright, Aeschylus, is known to have presented an entire trilogy based upon the Oedipus myth, winning the first prize at the City Dionysia. The First play was *Laius*, the second was *Oedipus*, and the third was *Seven against Thebes*. Only the third play survives, in which Oedipus' sons Eteocles and Polynices kill each other warring over the throne. Much like his *Oresteia*, this trilogy would have detailed the tribulations of a House over three successive generations. The satyr play that followed the trilogy was called the *Sphinx*.

Sophocles' Oedipus the King

As Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* begins, the people of Thebes are begging the king for help, begging him to discover the cause of the plague. Oedipus stands before them and swears to find the root of their suffering and to end it. Just then, Creon returns to Thebes from a visit to the oracle. Apollo has made it known that Thebes is harboring a terrible abomination and that the plague will only be lifted when the true murderer of old King Laius is discovered and punished for his crime. Oedipus swears to do this, not realizing of course that he himself is the abomination that he has sworn to exorcise. The stark truth emerges slowly over the course of the play, as Oedipus clashes with the blind seer Tiresias, who senses the truth. Oedipus remains in strict denial, though, becoming convinced that Tiresias is somehow plotting with Creon to usurp the throne.

Realization begins to slowly dawn in Scene II of the play when Jocasta mentions out of hand that Laius was slain at a place where three roads meet. This stirs something in Oedipus' memory and he suddenly remembers the men that he fought and killed one day long ago at a place where three roads met. He realizes, horrified, that he might be the man he's seeking. One household servant survived the attack and now lives out his old age in a frontier district of Thebes. Oedipus sends immediately for the man to either confirm or deny his guilt. At the very worst, though, he expects to find himself to be the unsuspecting murderer of a man unknown to him. The truth has not yet been made clear.

The moment of epiphany comes late in the play. At the beginning of Scene III, Oedipus is still waiting for the servant to be brought into the city, when a messenger arrives from Corinth to declare the King Polybus is dead. Oedipus, when he hears this news is overwhelmed with relief, because he believed that Polybus was the father whom the oracle had destined him to murder, and he momentarily believes himself to have escaped fate. He tells this all to the present company, including the messenger, but the messenger knows that it is not true. He is the man who found Oedipus as a baby in the pass of Kithairon and gave him to King Polybus to raise. He reveals, furthermore that the servant who is being brought to the city as they speak is the very same man who took Oedipus up into the mountains as a baby. Jocasta realizes now all that has happened. She begs Oedipus not to pursue the matter further. He refuses,

and she withdraws into the palace as the servant is arriving. The old man arrives, and it is clear at once that he knows everything. At the behest of Oedipus, he tells it all.

Overwhelmed with the knowledge of all his crimes, Oedipus rushes into the palace, where he finds his mother, his wife, dead by her own hand. Ripping a brooch from her dress, Oedipus blinds himself with it. Bleeding from the eyes, he begs Creon, who has just arrived on the scene, to exile him forever from Thebes. Creon agrees to this request, Oedipus begs to hold his two daughters Antigone and Ismene with his hands one more time to have their fill of tears and Creon out of pity sends the girls in to see Oedipus one more time.

Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*

In Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, Oedipus becomes a wanderer, pursued by Creon and his men. He finally finds refuge at the holy wilderness right outside of Athens, where it is said that Theseus took care of the two of them, Oedipus and his daughter, Antigone. Creon eventually catches up to Oedipus. He asks Oedipus to come back from Colonus to bless his son, Eteocles. Angry that his son did not love him enough to take care of him, he curses both Eteocles and his brother, condemning both to sudden deaths. Oedipus dies a peaceful death; his grave is said to be sacred to the gods.



Oedipus at Colonus

Sophocles' *Antigone*

In Sophocles' *Antigone*, when Oedipus stepped down as king of Thebes, he gave the kingdom to his two sons, Eteocles and Polynices, both of whom agreed to alternate the throne every year. However, they showed no concern for their father, who cursed them for their negligence. After the first year, Eteocles refused to step down and Polynices attacked Thebes with his supporters (as portrayed in the *Seven Against Thebes* by Aeschylus and the *Phoenician Women* by Euripides). Both brothers died in the battle. King Creon, who ascended to the throne of Thebes, decreed that Polynices was not to be buried. Antigone, Polynices' sister, defied the order, but was caught. Creon decreed that she was to be put into a stone box in the ground, this in spite of her betrothal to his son Haemon. Antigone's sister, Ismene, then declared she had aided Antigone and wanted the same fate, but Creon eventually declined executing her. The gods, through the blind prophet Tiresias, expressed their disapproval of Creon's decision, which convinced him to rescind his order, and he went to bury Polynices himself. However, Antigone had already hanged herself in her tomb, rather than suffering the slow death of being buried alive. When Creon arrived at the tomb where she had been interred, his son Haemon attacked him upon seeing the body of his deceased fiancée, but failing to kill Creon he killed himself. When Creon's wife, Eurydice, was informed of the death of Haemon, she too took her own life.

Euripides' *Phoenissae*, *Chrysippus* and *Oedipus*

In the beginning of Euripides' *Phoenissae*, Jocasta recalls the story of Oedipus. Generally, the play weaves together the plots of the *Seven Against Thebes* and *Antigone*. The play differs from the other tales in two major respects. First, it describes in detail why Laius and Oedipus had a feud: Laius ordered Oedipus out of the road so his chariot could pass, but proud Oedipus refused to move. Second, in the play Jocasta has not killed herself at the discovery of her incest - otherwise she could not play the prologue, for fathomable reasons - nor has Oedipus fled into exile, but they have stayed in Thebes only to delay their doom until the fatal duel of their sons/brothers/nephews Eteocles and Polynices: Jocasta commits suicide over the two men's dead bodies, and Antigone follows Oedipus into exile.

In *Chrysippus*, Euripides develops backstory on the curse: Laius' "sin" was to have kidnapped Chrysippus, Pelops' son, in order to violate him, and this caused the gods' revenge on all his family - boy-loving having been so far an

exclusive of the gods themselves, unknown to mortals.

Euripides wrote also an *Oedipus*, of which only a few fragments survive.^[10] The first line of the prologue recalled Laius' hubristic action of conceiving a son against Apollo's command. At some point in the action of the play, a character engaged in a lengthy and detailed description of the Sphinx and her riddle - preserved in five fragments from Oxyrhynchus, P.Oxy. 2459 (published by Eric Gardner Turner in 1962).^[11] The tragedy featured also many moral maxims on the theme of marriage, preserved in the Anthologion of Stobaeus. The most striking lines, however, state that in this play Oedipus was blinded by Laius' attendants, and that this happened before his identity as Laius' son had been discovered, therefore marking important differences with the Sophoclean treatment of the myth, which is now regarded as the 'standard' version. Many attempts have been made to reconstruct the plot of the play, but none of them is more than hypothetical, because of the scanty remains that survive from its text and of the total absence of ancient descriptions or résumés - though it has been suggested that a part of Hyginus' narration of the Oedipus myth might in fact derive from Euripides' play. Some echoes of the Euripidean Oedipus have been traced also in a scene of Seneca's Oedipus (see below), in which Oedipus himself describes to Jocasta his adventure with the Sphinx.^[12]

Other playwrights

At least three other 5th century BC authors who were younger than Sophocles wrote plays about Oedipus. These include Achaëus of Eretria, Nichomachus and the elder Xenocles.^[13]

Later additions

The *Bibliotheca*, a Roman-era mythological handbook, includes a riddle for the Sphinx, borrowing the poetry of Hesiod:

What is that which has one voice and yet becomes four-footed and two-footed and three-footed?^[14]

Later addition to Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*

Due to the popularity of Sophocles's *Antigone* (c. 442 BC), the ending (lines 1005-78) of *Seven against Thebes* was added some fifty years after Aeschylus' death.^[15] Whereas the play (and the trilogy of which it is the last play) was meant to end with somber mourning for the dead brothers, the spurious ending features a herald announcing the prohibition against burying Polyneices, and Antigone's declaration that she will defy that edict

Oedipus in post-Classical literature

Oedipus was a figure who was also used in the Latin literature of ancient Rome. Julius Caesar wrote a play on Oedipus, but it has not survived into modern times.^[16] Ovid included Oedipus in *Metamorphoses*, but only as the person who defeated the Sphinx. He makes no mention of Oedipus' troubled experiences with his father and mother. Seneca the Younger wrote his own play on the story of Oedipus in the first century AD. It differs in significant ways from the work of Sophocles.

Seneca's play on the myth was intended to be recited at private gatherings and not actually performed. It has however been successfully staged since the Renaissance. It was adapted by John Dryden in his very successful heroic drama *Oedipus*, licensed in 1678. The 1718 *Oedipus* was also the first play written by Voltaire. A version of Oedipus by Frank McGuinness was performed at the National Theatre in late 2008, starring Ralph Fiennes and Claire Higgins.

In 1960, Immanuel Velikovsky (1895–1979) published a book called *Oedipus and Akhnaton* which made a comparison between the stories of the legendary Greek figure, Oedipus, and the historic Egyptian King of Thebes, Akhnaton. The book is presented as a thesis that combines with Velikovsky's series *Ages in Chaos*, concluding through his revision of Egyptian history that the Greeks who wrote the tragedy of Oedipus may have penned it in likeness of the life and story of Akhnaton, because in the revision Akhnaton would have lived much closer to the

time when the legend first surfaced in Greece, providing an historical basis for the story. Each of the major characters in the Greek story are identified with the people involved in Akhnaton's family and court, and some interesting parallels are drawn.

Oedipus or Oedipais?

It has been suggested by some that in the earliest Ur-myth of the hero, he was called Oedipais: "child of the swollen sea."^[17] He was so named because of the method by which his birth parents tried to abandon him—by placing him in a chest and tossing it into the ocean. The mythic topos of forsaking a child to the sea or a river is well attested, found (e.g.) in the myths of Perseus, Telephus, Dionysus, Romulus and Remus and Moses.^[18] Over the centuries, however, Oedipais seems to have been corrupted into the familiar Oedipus: "swollen foot." And it was this new name that might have inspired the addition of a bizarre element to the story of Oedipus' abandonment on Mt. Cithaeron. Exposure on a mountain was in fact a common method of child abandonment in Ancient Greece. The binding of baby Oedipus' ankles, however, is unique; it can thus be argued that the ankle-binding was inelegantly grafted onto the Oedipus myth simply to explain his new name.

The Oedipus complex

Sigmund Freud used the name *The Oedipus complex* to explain the origin of certain neuroses in childhood. It is defined as a male child's unconscious desire for the exclusive love of his mother. This desire includes jealousy towards the father and the unconscious wish for that parent's death, as well as the unconscious desire for sexual intercourse with the mother. Oedipus himself, as portrayed in the myth, did not suffer from this neurosis – at least, not towards Jocasta, whom he only met as an adult (if anything, such feelings would have been directed at Merope – but there is no hint of that). Freud reasoned that the ancient Greek audience, which heard the story told or saw the plays based on it, did know that Oedipus was actually killing his father and marrying his mother; the story being continually told and played therefore reflected a preoccupation with the theme.^[19]

The term oedipism is used in medicine for serious self inflicted eye injury, an extremely rare form of severe self-harm.

Notes

[1] http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=464402&partid=1

[2] Euripides, *Phoenissae*

[3] Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* 1220-1226; Euripides, *Phoenissae*

[4] Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* 1026-1030; Euripides, *Phoenissae*

[5] Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* 132-137

[6] Pindar, *Second Olympian Ode*; Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* 473-488; Euripides, *Phoenissae*

[7] Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* 136, 1578; Euripides, *Phoenissae*

[8] Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* 1316

[9] Pindar, *Second Olympian Ode*

[10] R. Kannicht, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta (TrGF)* vol. 5.1, Göttingen 2004; see also F. Jouan - H. Van Looy, "Euripide. tome 8.2 - Fragments", Paris 2000

[11] Reviewed by Hugh Lloyd-Jones in "Gnomon" 35 (1963), pp. 446-447

[12] Joachim Dingel, in "Museum Helveticum" 27 (1970), 90-96

[13] Burian, P. (2009). "Inconclusive Conclusion: the Ending(s) of *Oedipus Tyrannus*". In Goldhill, S. & Hall, E.. *Sophocles and the Greek Tragic Tradition*. Cambridge University Press. p. 100. ISBN 978-0-521-88785-4.

[14] *Bibliotheca* III.5.7

[15] See (e.g.) Brown 1976, 206-19.

[16] E.F. Watling's Introduction to Seneca: Four Tragedies and Octavia

[17] See (e.g.) Lowry 1995, 879; Carloni/Nobili 2004, 147 n.1.

[18] This version of the Oedipus myth is in fact attested in some scholia (at lines 13 and 26) to Euripides' *Phoenician Women*.

[19] Bruno Bettelheim (1983). *Freud and Man's Soul*. Knopf. ISBN 0-394-52481-0.

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Orpheus

Orpheus (♫ /'ɔrfi:əs/ or /'ɔrfju:s/; Ancient Greek: Ὀρφεύς) was a legendary musician, poet, and prophet in ancient Greek religion and myth. The major stories about him are centered on his ability to charm all living things and even stones with his music, his attempt to retrieve his wife, Eurydice, from the underworld, and his death at the hands of those who could not hear his divine music. As an archetype of the inspired singer, Orpheus is one of the most significant figures in the reception of classical mythology in Western culture, portrayed or alluded to in countless forms of art and popular culture including poetry, opera, and painting.^[1]

For the Greeks, Orpheus was a founder and prophet of the so-called "Orphic" mysteries. He was credited with the composition of the *Orphic Hymns*, a collection of which survives.^[2] Shrines containing purported relics of Orpheus were regarded as oracles. Some ancient Greek sources note Orpheus's Thracian origins.^[3]



Roman mosaic depicting Orpheus, wearing a Phrygian cap and surrounded by the beasts charmed by the music of his lyre.

Background



Orpheus (left, with lyre) among the Thracians, from an Attic red-figure bell-krater (ca. 440 BC)^[4]

The earliest literary reference to Orpheus is a two-word fragment of the sixth-century BCE lyric poet Ibycus: *onomaklyton Orphēn* ("Orpheus famous-of-name"). He is not mentioned in Homer or Hesiod.^[5] Most ancient sources accept his historical existence; Aristotle is an exception.^[6]

Pindar calls Orpheus "the father of songs"^[7] and identifies him as a son of the Thracian king Oeagrus^[8] and the Muse Calliope.^[9] but as Karl Kerényi observes, "in the popular mind he was more closely linked to the community of his disciples and adherents than with any particular race or family".^[10]

Greeks of the Classical age venerated Orpheus as the greatest of all poets and musicians: it was said that while Hermes had invented the

lyre, Orpheus perfected it. Poets such as Simonides of Ceos said that Orpheus' music and singing could charm the birds, fish and wild beasts, coax the trees and rocks into dance,^[11] and divert the course of rivers. He was one of the handful of Greek heroes^[12] to visit the Underworld and return; his music and song even had power over Hades.

Some sources credit Orpheus with further gifts to mankind: medicine, which is more usually under the aegis of Aesculapius; writing,^[13] which is usually credited to Cadmus; and agriculture, where Orpheus assumes the Eleusinian role of Triptolemus as giver of Demeter's knowledge to mankind. Orpheus was an augur and seer; practiced magical arts and astrology, founded cults to Apollo and Dionysus^[14] and prescribed the mystery rites preserved in Orphic texts. In addition, Pindar and Apollonius of Rhodes^[15] place Orpheus as the harpist and companion of Jason and the Argonauts. Orpheus had a brother named Linus who went to Thebes and became a Theban.^[16]

Strabo^[17] (64 BC – c. AD 24) presents Orpheus as a mortal, who lived and died in a village close to Olympus. "Some, of course, received him willingly, but others, since they suspected a plot and violence, combined against him and killed him." He made money as a musician and "wizard" – Strabo uses *agurteuonta* (αγυρτεύοντα),^[18] also used by Sophocles in *Oedipus Tyrannus* to characterize Teiresias as a trickster with an excessive desire for possessions. *Agurtēs* (αγύρτης) most often meant charlatan^[19] and always had a negative connotation. Pausanias writes of an unnamed Egyptian who considered Orpheus a magician (*mageuse* (μάγευσε)).^[20]

Mythology

Early life

According to Apollodorus^[21] and a fragment of Pindar,^[22] Orpheus's father was Oeagrus, a Thracian king; or, according to another version of the story, the god Apollo. His mother was the muse Calliope; or, a daughter of Pierus,^[23] son of Makednos. His birthplace and place of residence was in Pimpleia,^{[24][25][26]} Olympus. In *Argonautica* the location of Oeagrus and Calliope's wedding is close to Pimpleia,^[27] near Olympus.^{[28][29]} While living with his mother and her eight beautiful sisters in Parnassus,^[30] he met Apollo, who was courting the laughing muse Thalia. Apollo, as the god of music, gave Orpheus a golden lyre and taught him to play it. Orpheus's mother taught him to make verses for singing. Strabo mentions that he lived in Pimpleia.^[28] He is also said to have studied in Egypt.^[31]



Important sites in the life and travels of Orpheus

Orpheus is said to have established the worship of Hecate in Aegina.^[32] In Laconia Orpheus is said to have brought the worship of Demeter Chthonia^[33] and that of the *Kores Sōteiras* (Greek, *Κόρες Σωτείρας*) savior maid.^[34] Also in Taygetus a wooden image of Orpheus was said to have been kept by Pelasgians in the sanctuary of the Eleusinian Demeter.^[35]

Travelling as an Argonaut

The *Argonautica* (Greek: Ἀργοναυτικά) is a Greek epic poem written by Apollonius Rhodius in the 3rd century BC. Orpheus took part in this adventure and used his skills to aid his companions. Chiron told Jason that without the aid of Orpheus, the Argonauts would never be able to pass the Sirens—the same Sirens encountered by Odysseus in Homer's epic poem the *Odyssey*. The Sirens lived on three small, rocky islands called Sirenum scopuli and sang beautiful songs that enticed sailors to come to them, which resulted in the crashing of their ships into the islands. When Orpheus heard their voices, he drew his lyre and played music that was louder and more beautiful, drowning out the Sirens' bewitching songs.

Death of Eurydice

The most famous story in which Orpheus figures is that of his wife Eurydice (sometimes referred to as Euridice and also known as Agriope). While walking among her people, the Cicones, in tall grass at her wedding, Eurydice was set upon by a satyr. In her efforts to escape the satyr, Eurydice fell into a nest of vipers and suffered a fatal bite on her heel. Her body was discovered by Orpheus who, overcome with grief, played such sad and mournful songs that all the nymphs and gods wept. On their advice, Orpheus travelled to the underworld and by his music softened the hearts of Hades and Persephone (he was the only person ever to do so), who agreed to allow Eurydice to return with him to earth on one condition: he should walk in front of her and not look back until they both had reached the upper world. He set off with Eurydice following, and, in his anxiety, as soon as he reached the upper world, he turned to look at her, forgetting that both needed to be in the upper world, and she vanished for the second time, but now forever.

The story in this form belongs to the time of Virgil, who first introduces the name of Aristaeus (by the time of Virgil's *Georgics*, the myth has Aristaeus chasing Eurydice when she was bitten by a serpent) and the tragic outcome.^[36] Other ancient writers, however, speak of Orpheus's visit to the underworld in a more negative light; according to Phaedrus in Plato's *Symposium*,^[37] the infernal gods only "presented an apparition" of Eurydice to him. Ovid says that Eurydice's death was not caused by fleeing from Aristaeus but by dancing with naiads on her wedding day. In fact, Plato's representation of Orpheus is that of a coward, as instead of choosing to die in order to be with the one he loved, he instead mocked the gods by trying to go to Hades and get her back alive. Since his love was not "true"—he did not want to die for love—he was actually punished by the gods, first by giving him only the apparition of his former wife in the underworld, and then by being killed by women.

The story of Eurydice may actually be a late addition to the Orpheus myths. In particular, the name *Eurudike* ("she whose justice extends widely") recalls cult-titles attached to Persephone. The myth may have been derived from another Orpheus legend, in which he travels to Tartarus and charms the goddess Hecate.^[38]

This story also led to the composition of the song, "Minuet and the Dance of the Blessed Spirits", from *Orfeo ed Euridice*.

Orpheus' descent to the Underworld is paralleled in other versions of a worldwide theme: the Japanese myth of Izanagi and Izanami, the Akkadian/Sumerian myth of *Inanna's Descent to the Underworld*, and Mayan myth of Ix Chel and Itzamna. The Nez Perce tell a story about the trickster figure, Coyote, that shares many similarities with the story of Orpheus and Eurydice.^[39] This is but one theme present in a larger "North American Orpheus Tradition" in American Indian oral tradition.^[40] The myth theme of not looking back, an essential precaution in Jason's raising of chthonic Brimo Hecate under Medea's guidance,^[41] is reflected in the Biblical story of Lot's wife when escaping from Sodom. More directly, the story of Orpheus is similar to the ancient Greek tales of Persephone captured by Hades and similar stories of Adonis captive in the underworld. However, the developed form of the Orpheus myth was entwined with the Orphic mystery cults and, later in Rome, with the development of Mithraism and the cult of Sol Invictus.



Orpheus with the lyre and surrounded by beasts
(Byzantine & Christian Museum, Athens)

Death

According to a Late Antique summary of Aeschylus's lost play *Bassarids*, Orpheus at the end of his life disdained the worship of all gods save the sun, whom he called Apollo. One early morning he went to the oracle of Dionysus at Mount Pangaion^[42] to salute his god at dawn, but was ripped to shreds by Thracian Maenads for not honoring his previous patron (Dionysus) and buried in Pieria.^[14] Here his death is analogous with the death of Pentheus. For this reason it is sometimes speculated that the Orphic mystery cult regarded Orpheus as a parallel figure to or even an incarnation of Dionysus himself,^[43] due to their many parallels, such as their similar journeys into Hades and identical deaths (in the case of Dionysus Zagreus^[44]). A view supported by the conjectured Thracian belief that their kings were regarded as the incarnations of Dionysus^[45] which would have included King Oeagrus, and his heir Orpheus, as well as the foundation or reform of the Dionysian Mysteries by Orpheus. But this remains controversial. Pausanias writes that Orpheus was buried in Dion and that he met his death there.^[46] He writes that the river Helicon sank underground when the women that killed Orpheus tried to wash off their blood-stained hands in its waters.^[47]

Ovid also recounts that the Ciconian^[48] women, Dionysus' followers, spurned by Orpheus, who had forsworn the love of women after the death of Eurydice and had taken only youths as his lovers,^[49] first threw sticks and stones at him as he played, but his music was so beautiful even the rocks and branches refused to hit him. Enraged, the women tore him to pieces during the frenzy of their Bacchic orgies.^[50] Medieval folklore put additional spin on the story: in Albrecht Dürer's drawing of Orpheus' death, a ribbon high in the tree above him is lettered *Orfeus der erst puseran* ("Orpheus, the first sodomite") an interpretation of the passage in Ovid where Orpheus is said to have been "the first of the Thracian people to transfer his love to young boys."^[51]



The cave of Orpheus' oracle in Antissa, Lesbos.



Thracian Girl Carrying the Head of Orpheus on His Lyre by
Gustave Moreau (1865)

His head and lyre, still singing mournful songs, floated down the swift Hebrus to the Mediterranean shore. There, the winds and waves carried them on to the Lesbos^[52] shore, where the inhabitants buried his head and a shrine was built in his honour near Antissa;^[53] there his oracle prophesied, until it was silenced by Apollo.^[54]

The lyre was carried to heaven by the Muses, and was placed among the stars. The Muses also gathered up the fragments of his body and buried them at Leibethra^[55] below Mount Olympus, where the nightingales sang over his grave. After the river Sys flooded^[56] Leibethra, the Macedonians took his bones to Dion. Orpheus' soul

returned to the underworld where he was reunited at last with his beloved Eurydice.

Another legend places his tomb at Dion,^[42] near Pydna in Macedon. In another version of the myth, Orpheus travels to Aornum in Thesprotia, Epirus to an old oracle for the dead. In the end Orpheus commits suicide from his grief

unable to find Eurydice.^[57]

Another account relates that he was struck with lightning by Zeus for having revealed the mysteries of the gods to men.^[58]

Orphic poems and rites

A number of Greek religious poems in hexameters were attributed to Orpheus, as they were to similar miracle-working figures, like Bakis, Musaeus, Abaris, Aristaeas, Epimenides, and the Sibyl. Of this vast literature, only two examples survived whole: a set of hymns composed at some point in the second or third century AD, and an Orphic Argonautica composed somewhere between the fourth and sixth centuries AD. Earlier Orphic literature, which may date back as far as the sixth century BC, survives only in papyrus fragments or in quotations. Some of the earliest fragments may have been composed by Onomacritus.^[59]

In addition to serving as a storehouse of mythological data along the lines of Hesiod's *Theogony*, Orphic poetry was recited in mystery-rites and purification rituals. Plato in particular tells of a class of vagrant beggar-priests who would go about offering purifications to the rich, a clatter of books by Orpheus and Musaeus in tow (Republic 364c-d). Those who were especially devoted to these ritual and poems often practiced vegetarianism and abstention from sex, and refrained from eating eggs and beans — which came to be known as the *Orphikos bios*, or "Orphic way of life".^[60]



Nymphs Finding the Head of Orpheus, by John William Waterhouse

The Derveni papyrus, found in Derveni, Macedonia (Greece) in 1962, contains a philosophical treatise that is an allegorical commentary on an Orphic poem in hexameters, a theogony concerning the birth of the gods, produced in the circle of the philosopher Anaxagoras, written in the second half of the fifth century BC. Fragments of the poem are quoted making it "the most important new piece of evidence about Greek philosophy and religion to come to light since the Renaissance".^[61] The papyrus dates to around 340 BC, during the reign of Philip II of Macedon, making it Europe's oldest surviving manuscript. The historian William Mitford wrote in 1784 that the very earliest form of a higher and cohesive ancient Greek religion was manifest in the Orphic poems.^[62]

W.K.C. Guthrie wrote that Orpheus was the founder of mystery religions and the first to reveal to men the meanings of the initiation rites.^[63]

Etymology

Several etymologies for the name *Orpheus* have been proposed. A probable suggestion is that it is derived from a hypothetical PIE verb **orbhao-*, "to be deprived", from PIE **orbh-*, "to put asunder, separate". Cognates would include Greek *orphe*, "darkness",^[64] and Greek *orphanos*,^[65] "fatherless, orphan", from which comes English "orphan" by way of Latin. *Orpheus* would therefore be semantically close to *goao*,^[64] "to lament, sing wildly, cast a spell", uniting his seemingly disparate roles as disappointed lover, transgressive musician and mystery-priest into a single lexical whole. The word "orphic" is defined as mystic, fascinating and entrancing, and, probably, because of the oracle of Orpheus, "orphic" can also signify "oracular".^[66] Fulgentius, a mythographer of the late 5th to early 6th century AD, gave the unlikely etymology meaning "best voice," "Oraia-phonos".^[67]

Post-Classical Interpretations

The Orpheus motif has permeated Western culture and has been used as a theme in all art forms. Examples include the Breton Lais Sir Orfeo from the early 13th Century or the musical interpretations by Claudio Monteverdi *L'Orfeo* (1607) and Christoph Willibald Gluck's Opera *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762). Other modern adaptations include Dino Buzzati's graphic novel *Poem Strip*, a modified take on the character Orpheus in Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* and Peter Blegvad and Andy Partridge's music and spoken-word recording *Orpheus the Lowdown*. Composer Judge Smith based his most recent Songstory on the ancient myth of Orpheus. The 13th studio album of the alternative rock band Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds is called *Abattoir Blues/The Lyre of Orpheus*, with the initial song of the latter album based around a satirical reworking of the legend, viewed from a more modern male/female perspective. Vinicius de Moraes' play *Orfeu da Conceição*, later adapted by Marcel Camus in the 1959 film *Black Orpheus*, tells the story in the modern context of a favela in Rio de Janeiro during the Carnaval.

Notes

- [1] Geoffrey Miles, *Classical Mythology in English Literature: A Critical Anthology* (Routledge, 1999), p. 54ff.
- [2] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, Corinth, 2.30.1
- [3] Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets* (Routledge, 2007), p. 167, while taking note of depictions in Greek art, particularly vase painting, that show Orpheus attired as a Greek, often in contrast to those in Thracian dress around him.
- [4] Bell-krater, ca. 440 b.c.; red-figure, Attributed to the Painter of London E 497, Greek, Attic, Terracotta. (<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/24.97.30>)
- [5] Ibycus, *Fragments* 17 (Diehl); M. Owen Lee, *Virgil as Orpheus: A Study of the Georgics* State University of New York Press, Albany (1996), p. 3.
- [6] Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (<http://books.google.ie/books?id=ASijqFryr5IC>), Harvard University Press (1948), p. 1.
- [7] Pindar, *Pythian Odes*, 4.4.315 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:abo:tlg.0033.002&redirect=true>)
- [8] Pindar fragment 126.9.
- [9] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliothèque* 1.3.2; *Argonautica* 1.23, and the Orphic Hymn 24.12.
- [10] Kerenyi, *The Heroes of the Greeks* 1959:279f.
- [11] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliothèque* 1.3.2; Euripides, *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, 1212 and *The Bacchae*, 562; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 11: "with his songs, Orpheus, the bard of Thrace, allured the trees, the savage animals, and even the insensate rocks, to follow him>"
- [12] Others to brave the *nekyia* were Odysseus, Theseus and Heracles; Perseus also overcame Medusa in a chthonic setting.
- [13] A single literary epitaph, attributed to the sophist Alcidas, credits Orpheus with the invention of writing. See Ivan Mortimer Linforth, "Two Notes on the Legend of Orpheus", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 62, (1931):5-17).
- [14] Apollodorus (Pseudo Apollodorus), *Library and Epitome*, 1.3.2 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Apollod.+1.3.2>). "Orpheus also invented the mysteries of Dionysus, and having been torn in pieces by the Maenads he is buried in Pieria."
- [15] Apollonius, *Argonautica*, *passim*.
- [16] Apollodorus, *Library and Epitome*, 2.4.9 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Apollod.+2.4.9#fn1>), This Linus was a brother of Orpheus; he came to Thebes and became a Theban.
- [17] Strabo, *Geography* Book 7, Chapter 7 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0198:book=7:chapter=7&highlight=orpheus>) "The city Dium, in the foot-hills of Olympus, is not on the shore of the Thermaean Gulf, but is at a distance of as much as seven stadia from it. And the city Dium has a village near by, Pimpleia, where Orpheus lived. At the base of Olympus is a city Dium. And it has a village near by, Pimpleia. Here lived Orpheus, the Ciconian, it is said — a wizard who at first collected money from his music, together with his soothsaying and his celebration of the orgies connected with the mystic initiatory rites, but soon afterwards thought himself worthy of still greater things and procured for himself a throng of followers and power. Some, of course, received him willingly, but others, since they suspected a plot and violence, combined against him and killed him. And near here, also, is Leibethra."
- [18] *Archaic Period (Greek Literature, Volume 2)* by Gregory Nagy, ISBN 0-8153-3683-7, page 46
- [19] Index in Eustathii commentarios in Homeri Iliadem et Odysseam by Matthaeus Devarius, page 8
- [20] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 6.20.1.[18] "A man of Egypt said that Pelops received something from Amphion the Theban and buried it where is what they call Taraxippus, adding that it was the buried thing which frightened the mares of Oenomaus, as well as those of every charioteer since. This Egyptian thought that Amphion and the Thracian Orpheus were clever magicians, and that it was through their enchantments that the beasts came to Orpheus, and the stones came to Amphion for the building of the wall. The most probable of the stories in my opinion makes Taraxippus a surname of Horse Poseidon."
- [21] son of Oeagrus or Apollo and Calliope: Apollod. 1.3.1
- [22] Pindar, frag. 126, line 9, noted in Kerenyi 1959:280.
- [23] son of Muse Calliope or of daughter of Pierus: Paus. 9.30.4

- [24] Orpheus and Greek Religion (Mythos Books) by William Keith Guthrie and L. Alderlink, 1993, ISBN 0-691-02499-5, page 62
- [25] Orpheus and Greek Religion (Mythos Books) by William Keith Guthrie and L. Alderlink, 1993, ISBN 0-691-02499-5, page 61, "... is a city Dion. Near it is a village called Pimpleia. It was there they say that Orpheus the Kikonian lived ..."
- [26] Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion (Mythos Books) by Jane Ellen Harrison, 1991, ISBN 0-691-01514-7, page 469, "... and `near the city of Dium is a village called Pimpleia where Orpheus lived.... ..."
- [27] THE ARGONAUTICA, BOOK I, (ll. 23-34) First then let us name Orpheus whom once Calliope bare, it is said, wedded to Thracian Oeagrus, near the Pimpleian height.
- [28] Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion (Mythos Books) by Jane Ellen Harrison, 1991, ISBN 0-691-01514-7, page 469, "... and `near the city of Dium is a village called Pimpleia where Orpheus lived.... ..."
- [29] Strabo, Geography Book 7, Chapter 7 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0198:book=7:chapter=7&highlight=orpheus>) "The city Dium, in the foot-hills of Olympus, is not on the shore of the Thermaean Gulf, but is at a distance of as much as seven stadia from it. And the city Dium has a village near by, Pimpleia
- [30] The Greek Gods by Hoopes And Evslin, ISBN 0-590-44110-8, ISBN 0-590-44110-8, 1995, page 77 His father was a Thracian king; His mother the muse Calliope. For a while he lived on Parnassus with his mother and his eight beautiful aunts and there met Apollo who was courting the laughing muse Thalia. Apollo was taken with Orpheus, gave him his little golden lyre and taught him to play. And his mother taught him to make verses for singing.
- [31] Diodorus Siculus 4.25.2-4. (<http://www.theoi.com/Text/DiodorusSiculus4B.html>)
- [32] Pausanias, Description of Greece, Corinth, 2.30.1 [2] Of the gods, the Aeginetans worship most Hecate, in whose honor every year they celebrate mystic rites which, they say, Orpheus the Thracian established among them. Within the enclosure is a temple; its wooden image is the work of Myron,¹ and it has one face and one body. It was Alcamenes,² in my opinion, who first made three images of Hecate attached to one another, a figure called by the Athenians Epipurgidia (on the Tower); it stands beside the temple of the Wingless Victory.
- [33] Pausanias, Description of Greece, Laconia, 3.14.1,[5] but the wooden image of Thetis is guarded in secret. The cult of Demeter Chthonia (of the Lower World) the Lacedaemonians say was handed on to them by Orpheus, but in my opinion it was because of the sanctuary in Hermione⁴ that the Lacedaemonians also began to worship Demeter Chthonia. The Spartans have also a sanctuary of Serapis, the newest sanctuary in the city, and one of Zeus surnamed Olympian.
- [34] Pausanias, Description of Greece, Laconia, 3.13.1, Opposite the Olympian Aphrodite the Lacedaemonians have a temple of the Saviour Maid. Some say that it was made by Orpheus the Thracian, others by Abairis when he had come from the Hyperboreans.
- [35] Pausanias, Description of Greece, Laconia, 3.20.1,[5] Between Taletum and Euoras is a place they name Therae, where they say Leto from the Peaks of Taygetus ... is a sanctuary of Demeter surnamed Eleusinian. Here according to the Lacedaemonian story Heracles was hidden by Asclepius while he was being healed of a wound. In the sanctuary is a wooden image of Orpheus, a work, they say, of Pelasgians
- [36] M. Owen Lee, *Virgil as Orpheus: A Study of the Georgics*, State University of New York Press, Albany (1996), p. 9.
- [37] *Symposium* 179d (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0174:text=Sym.:section=179d>).
- [38] Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, Penguin Books Ltd., London (1955), Volume 1, Chapter 28, "Orpheus", p. 115.
- [39] Lopez, Barry Holstun. *Giving Birth to Thunder, Sleeping With His Daughter: Coyote Builds North America*. Avon Books, 1977, pp. 131-134.
- [40] Wise, R. Todd, *A Neocomparative Examination of the Orpheus Myth As Found in the Native American and European Traditions*. UMI Press, 1998
- [41] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica*, book III: "Let no footfall or barking of dogs cause you to turn around, lest you ruin everything", Medea warns Jason; after the dread rite, "The son of Aison was seized by fear, but even so he did not turn round..." (Richard Hunter, translator).
- [42] Orpheus and Greek Religion by William Keith Guthrie and L. Alderlink, ISBN 0-691-02499-5, page 32
- [43] Classical Mythology - Page 279, Mark P. O. Morford, Robert J. Lenardon.
- [44] Harvard Studies in Classical Philology: Volume 88 - Page 211
- [45] Zeus. A Study in Ancient Religion. Volume 2, Part 1. Page 271
- [46] Pausanias, Description of Greece, Boeotia, 9.30.1 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Paus.+9.30.4>), [7] The Macedonians who dwell in the district below Mount Pieria and the city of Dium say that it was here that Orpheus met his end at the hands of the women. Going from Dium along the road to the mountain, and advancing twenty stades, you come to a pillar on the right surmounted by a stone urn, which according to the natives contains the bones of Orpheus.
- [47] Pausanias, Description of Greece, Boeotia, 9.30.1 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Paus.+9.30.4>), [8] There is also a river called Helicon. After a course of seventy-five stades the stream hereupon disappears under the earth. After a gap of about twenty-two stades the water rises again, and under the name of Baphyra instead of Helicon flows into the sea as a navigable river. The people of Dium say that at first this river flowed on land throughout its course. But, they go on to say, the women who killed Orpheus wished to wash off in it the blood-stains, and thereat the river sank underground, so as not to lend its waters to cleanse manslaughter
- [48] Ovid before exile: art and punishment in the Metamorphoses by Patricia Jane Johnson, 2008, ISBN-0299224007, page 103, "by the Ciconian women."
- [49] Ovid - The Metamorphoses - Book X (http://www.tkline.freemove.co.uk/Metamorph10.htm#_Toc64105565)
- [50] Ovid - The Metamorphoses - Book XI (<http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/Metamorph11.htm>)
- [51] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.85. (<http://www.theoi.com/Text/OvidMetamorphoses10.html#1>)
- [52] Carlos Parada (<http://homepage.mac.com/cparada/GML/Orpheus.html>), "His head fell into the sea and was cast by the waves upon the island of Lesbos where the Lesbians buried it, and for having done this the Lesbians have the reputation of being skilled in music."

- [53] A site proposed as the oracle of Orpheus in Antissa was identified in the early 21st century; see Harissis H.V. et al. "The Spelios of Antissa: The oracle of Orpheus in Lesvos" *Archaiologia kai Technes* 2002;83:68-73 (article in Greek with English abstract)
- [54] Flavius Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, 4.14. (http://www.livius.org/ap-ark/apollonius/life/va_4_11.html#§14)
- [55] The Writing of Orpheus: Greek Myth in Cultural Context by Marcelle Detienne, ISBN 0-8018-6954-4, page 161
- [56] Pausanias, Description of Greece, Boeotia, 9.30.1 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Paus.+9.30.4>) [11]
Immediately when night came the god sent heavy rain, and the river Sys (Boar), one of the torrents about Olympus, on this occasion threw down the walls of Libethra, overturning sanctuaries of gods and houses of men, and drowning the inhabitants and all the animals in the city. When Libethra was now a city of ruin, the Macedonians in Dium, according to my friend of Larisa, carried the bones of Orpheus to their own country.
- [57] Pausanias, Description of Greece, Boeotia, 9.30.1 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Paus.+9.30.4>), [6]
- Others have said that his wife died before him, and that for her sake he came to Aornum in Thesprotis, where of old was an oracle of the dead. He thought, they say, that the soul of Eurydice followed him, but turning round he lost her, and committed suicide for grief. The Thracians say that such nightingales as nest on the grave of Orpheus sing more sweetly and louder than others.
- [58] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, Introduction 4 (<http://classicpersuasion.org/pw/diogenes/dlintro.htm>); Encyclopædia Britannica - 1911 Edition, Orpheus (<http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Orpheus>)
- [59] Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (<http://books.google.ie/books?id=ASijqFryr5IC>), Harvard University Press (1948), p. 1.
- [60] Moore, p. 56 says that "the use of eggs and beans was forbidden, for these articles were associated with the worship of the dead".
- [61] Richard Janko, Bryn Mawr Classical Review, (2006) of K. Tsantsanoglou, G.M. Parássoglou, T. Kouremenos (editors), 2006. *The Derveni Papyrus* (<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/2006/2006-10-29.html>) (Florence: Olschki) series "Studi e testi per il "Corpus dei papiri filosofici greci e latini", vol. 13).
- [62] Mitford, p.89: "But the very early inhabitants of Greece had a religion far less degenerated from original purity. To this curious and interesting fact, abundant testimonies remain. They occur in those poems, of uncertain origin and uncertain date, but unquestionably of great antiquity, which are called the poems of Orpheus or rather the Orphic poems [particularly in the Hymn to Jupiter, quoted by Aristotle in the seventh chapter of his Treatise on the World: Ζεύς πρῶτος γένητο, Ζεύς υἱότατος, x. τ. ε]; and they are found scattered among the writings of the philosophers and historians." The idea of a religion "degenerated from original purity" expressed an Enlightenment idealisation of an assumed primitive state that is one connotation of "primitivism" in the history of ideas.
- [63] Guthrie, pp.17-18. "As founder of mystery-religions, Orpheus was first to reveal to men the meaning of the rites of initiation (*teletai*). We read of this in both Plato and Aristophanes (Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 1032; Plato, *Republic*, 364e, a passage which suggests that literary authority was made to take the responsibility for the rites)". Guthrie goes on to write about "This less worthy but certainly popular side of Orphism is represented for us again by the charms or incantations of Orpheus which we may also read of as early as the fifth century. Our authority is Euripides. We have already noticed the 'charm on the Thracian tablets' in the *Alcestis* and in *Cyclops* one of the lazy and frightened Satyrs, unwilling to help Odysseus in the task of driving the burning stake into the single eye of the giant, exclaims: 'But I know a spell of Orpheus, a fine one, which will make the brand step up of its own accord to burn this one-eyed son of Earth' (Euripides, *Cyclops* 646 = Kern, test. 83).".
- [64] Archetypal Imagination: Glimpses of the Gods in Life and Art by Noel Cobb, ISBN 0-940262-47-9, page 240
- [65] Myth and the polis by Dora Carlisky, ISBN 0-8014-2473-9, page 46
- [66] Macmillan Dictionary for Students by Ltd. Pan Macmillan, ISBN 0-02-761560-X, page 711
- [67] Classical Mythology in English Literature: A Critical Anthology by Geoffrey Miles, ISBN 0-415-14755-7, 1999, page 57

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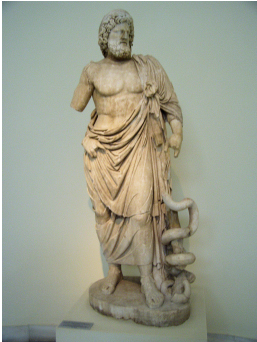
- Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliothèque* I, iii, 2; ix, 16 & 25;
- Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* I, 23- 34; IV, 891-909.
- Bernabé, Albertus (ed.), *Orphicorum et Orphicis similium testimonia et fragmenta. Poetae Epici Graeci. Pars II. Fasc. I*. Bibliotheca Teubneriana, München/Leipzig: K.G. Saur, 2004. ISBN 3-598-71707-5. review of this book (<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/2004/2004-12-29.html>)
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- Kerenyi, Karl (1959). *The Heroes of the Greeks*. New York/London: Thames and Hudson.
- Mitford, William, *The History of Greece*, 1784. Cf. v.1, Chapter II, *Religion of the Early Greeks*.
- Moore, Clifford H., *Religious Thought of the Greeks*, 1916. Kessinger Publishing (April 2003). ISBN 978-0-7661-5130-7
- Ossoli, Margaret Fuller, *Orpheus*, a sonnet about his trip to the underworld.
- Ovid, *Metamorphoses* X, 1-105; XI, 1-66;
- Rohde, Erwin, *Psyche*, 1925. cf. Chapter 10, The Orphics.


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- Smith, William; *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, London (1873). "Orpheus" (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0104:alphabetic+letter=O:entry+group=8:entry=orpheus-bio-1>)
- Taylor, Thomas [translator], *The Mystical Hymns of Orpheus* (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/hoo/>), 1896.
- West, Martin L., *The Orphic Poems*, 1983. There is a sub-thesis in this work that early Greek religion was heavily influenced by Central Asian shamanistic practices. One major point of contact was the ancient Crimean city of Olbia.
- Wise, R. Todd, *A Neocomparative Examination of the Orpheus Myth As Found in the Native American and European Traditions*, 1998. UMI. The thesis explores Orpheus as a single mythic structure present in traditions that extend from antiquity to contemporary times and across cultural contexts.

External links

- Greek Mythology Link, Orpheus (<http://www.maicar.com/GML/Orpheus.html>)
 - Theoi Project: online text: The Orphic Hymns translated by Thomas Taylor (<http://www.theoi.com/Text/OrphicHymns1.html>)
 - The Life and Theology of Orpheus by Thomas Taylor (http://www.prometheustrust.co.uk/html/5_-_hymns.html) - this link also has several Orphic Hymns and their accompanying notes by Taylor.
 - Orphica in English and Greek, Select Resources (<http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/ancient-greece/orphica.asp>)
 - Leibethra, The Tomb of Orpheus (http://www.kz-epka.gr/mambo/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=86&Itemid=118) (in Greek)
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Asclepius

Asclepius	
<div></div> <div>Asclepius with his serpent-entwined staff^[1]</div>	
God of medicine, healing, rejuvenation and physicians	
Symbol	A serpent-entwined staff
Consort	Epione
Parents	Apollo and Coronis
Children	Hygieia, Iaso, Aceso, Meditrina, and Panacea

Asclepius ( /æsˈkliːpiəs/; Greek: Ἀσκληπιός *Asklēpiós* Greek pronunciation: [asklɛˈpiós]; Latin *Aesculapius*) is the god of medicine and healing in ancient Greek religion. Asclepius represents the healing aspect of the medical arts; his daughters are Hygieia ("Hygiene", the goddess/personification of health, cleanliness, and sanitation), Iaso (the goddess of recuperation from illness), Aceso (the goddess of the healing process), Aglæa/Ægle (the goddess of beauty, splendor, glory, magnificence, and adornment), and Panacea (the goddess of universal remedy). He was associated with the Roman/Etruscan god Vediovis. He was one of Apollo's sons, sharing with Apollo the epithet *Paeon* ("the Healer").^[2] The rod of Asclepius, a snake-entwined staff, remains a symbol of medicine today.

Etymology

The etymology of the name is unknown. In his revised version of Frisk's *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Greek etymological dictionary), R.S.P. Beekes gives this summary of the different attempts:

"H. Grégoire (with R. Goossens and M. Mathieu) in *Asklēpios, Apollon Smintheus et Rudra* 1949 (Mém. Acad. Roy. de Belgique. Cl. d. lettres. 2. sér. 45), explains the name as 'the mole-hero', connecting σκάλοψ, ἀσπάλαξ 'mole' and refers to the resemblance of the Tholos in Epidauros and the building of a mole. (Thus Puhvel, *Comp. Mythol.* 1987, 135.) But the variants of Asklepios and those of the word for 'mole' do not agree. The name is typical for Pre-Greek words; apart from minor variations (β for π, αλ(α) for λα) we find α/αι (a well known variation; Fur. 335 - 339) followed by -γλαπ- or -σκλαπ-/σχλαπ/β-, i.e. a voiced velar (without -σ-) or a voiceless velar (or an aspirated one: we know that there was no distinction between the three in the substr. language) with a -σ-. I think that the -σ- renders an original affricate, which (prob. as δ) was lost before the -γ- (in Greek the group -σγ- is rare, and certainly before another consonant); Beekes Pre-Greek ^[3]. Szemerényi's etymology (*JHS* 94, 1974, 155) from Hitt. *assula(a)*- 'well-being' and *piya*- 'give' cannot be correct, as it does not explain the velar."^[4]

One might add that even though Szemerényi's etymology (Hitt. *asula*- + *piya*-) does not account for the velar, it is perhaps inserted spontaneously in Greek due to the fact that the cluster -sl- was uncommon in Greek: So, *Aslāpios would become Asklāpios automatically.

Mythology

Birth

He was the son of Apollo and Coronis. His mother was killed for being unfaithful to Apollo and was laid out on a funeral pyre to be consumed, but the unborn child was rescued from her womb. Or, alternatively, his mother died in labor and was laid out on the pyre to be consumed, but his father rescued the child, cutting him from her womb. From this he received the name Asklepios, "to cut open."^[5] Apollo carried the baby to the centaur Chiron who raised Asclepius and instructed him in the art of medicine.^[6]

Wives and offspring

Asclepius was married to Epione, with whom he had six daughters: Hygieia, Meditrina (the serpent-bearer), Panacea, Aceso, Iaso, and Aglaea,^{[7][8]} and three sons: Machaon, Podaleirios and Telesphoros. He also sired a son, Aratus, with Aristodama. The names of his daughters each rather transparently reflect a certain subset of the overall theme of "good health".^{[8][9][10][11][12][13][14]}

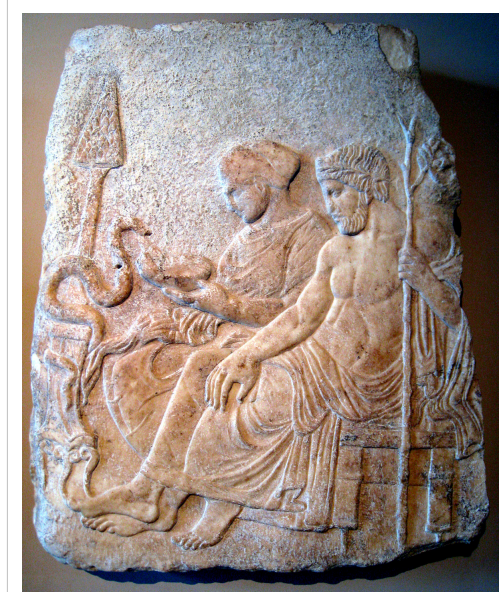
At some point, Asclepius was among those who took part in the Calydonian Boar hunt.

Death

Zeus killed Asclepius with a thunderbolt because he raised Hippolytus from the dead and accepted gold for it.^[15] Other stories say that Asclepius was killed because after bringing people back from the dead, Hades thought that no more dead spirits would come to the underworld, so he asked his brother Zeus to remove him. This angered Apollo who in turn murdered the Cyclopes who had made the thunderbolts for Zeus.^[16] For this act, Zeus suspended Apollo from the night sky^[17] and commanded Apollo to serve Admetus, King of Thessaly for a year. Once the year had passed, Zeus brought Apollo back to Mount Olympus and revived the Cyclopes that made his thunderbolts.^{[14][18]} After Asclepius' death, Zeus placed his body among the stars as the constellation Ophiuchus ("the Serpent Holder").^[19]

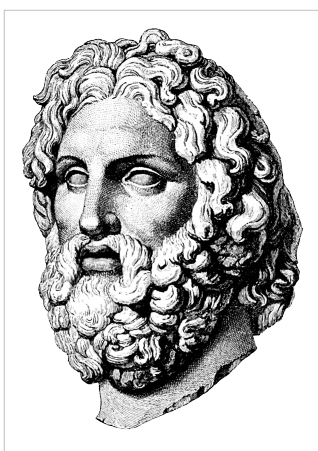
Some sources also stated that Asclepius was later resurrected as a god by Zeus to prevent any further feuds with Apollo.

Sacred places and practices



Asclepius with his daughter Hygieia

Greek deities series	
Primordial deities	
Titans and Olympians	
Aquatic deities	
Chthonic deities	
Personified concepts	
Other deities	
• Anemoi	• Muses
• Asclepius	• Nymphes
• Iris	• Pan
• Leto	• Psyche



The most famous temple of Asclepius was at Epidauros in north-eastern Peloponnese. Another famous healing temple (or asclepieion) was located on the island of Kos, where Hippocrates, the legendary "father of medicine", may have begun his career. Other asclepieia were situated in Trikala, Gortys (in Arcadia), and Pergamum in Asia.

In honor of Asclepius, a particular type of non-venomous snake was often used in healing rituals, and these snakes — the Aesculapian Snakes — crawled around freely on the floor in dormitories where the sick and injured slept. These snakes were introduced at the founding of each new temple of Asclepius throughout the classical world. From about 300 BC onwards, the cult of Asclepius grew very popular and pilgrims flocked to his healing temples (Asclepieia) to be cured of their ills. Ritual purification would be followed by offerings or sacrifices to the god

(according to means), and the supplicant would then spend the night in the holiest part of the sanctuary - the abaton (or adyton). Any dreams or visions would be reported to a priest who would prescribe the appropriate therapy by a process of interpretation.^[20] Some healing temples also used sacred dogs to lick the wounds of sick petitioners.^[21]

The original Hippocratic Oath began with the invocation "I swear by Apollo the Physician and by Asclepius and by Hygieia and Panacea and by all the gods ..."^[21]

Some later religious movements claimed links to Asclepius. In the 2nd century AD the controversial miracle-worker Alexander claimed that his god Glycon, a snake with a "head of linen"^[22] was an incarnation of Asclepius. The Greek language rhetorician and satirist Lucian produced the work *Alexander the False Prophet* to denounce the swindler for future generations. He described Alexander as having a character "made up of lying, trickery, perjury, and malice; [it was] facile, audacious, venturesome, diligent in the execution of its schemes, plausible, convincing, masking as good, and wearing an appearance absolutely opposite to its purpose."^[22] Justin Martyr, a philosophical defender of Christianity who wrote around 160 AD claimed that the myth of Asclepius foreshadowed rather than served as a source for claims of Jesus's healing powers.^[23]

The botanical genus *Asclepias* (commonly known as milkweed) is named after him and includes the medicinal plant *A. tuberosa* or "Pleurisy root".

Asclepius was depicted on the reverse of the Greek 10,000 drachmas banknote of 1995-2001.^[24]

Popular culture

- Asclepius was seen in Marvel Comics where he appeared in *Ares* #4.
- In *The Heroes of Olympus* (a sequel to *Percy Jackson & the Olympians*) book titled *The Son of Neptune*, the Lares named Vitellius is a descendant of Asclepius.

Notes

- [1] Statue of Asclepius of the Este type. Pentelic marble, Roman period copy of ca. 160 AD after a 4th-century BC original. From the temple of Asclepius at Epidauros (National Archaeological Museum, Athens, inv. 263).
- [2] Mitchell-Boyask, p. 141 (<http://books.google.com/books?id=5zJ2TlqoorEC&pg=PA141>)
- [3] <http://www.indoeuropean.nl/ied/pdf/pre-greek.pdf>
- [4] Greek etymology database (<http://www.indoeuropean.nl/cgi-bin/startq.cgi?flags=endnnl&root=leiden&basename=\data\ie\greek>)
- [5] The Asklepios cult (<http://www.theoi.com/Ouranios/Asklepios.html>)
- [6] Pindar, Pythian Ode 3. 5 ff (trans. Conway) (Greek lyric C5th B.C.)
- [7] Greek Lyric V Anonymous, Fragments 939 (Inscription from Erythrai) (trans. Campbell) (B.C.)
- [8] Suidas s.v. Epione (trans. Suda On Line) (Byzantine Greek lexicon C10th A.D.)
- [9] Pausanias, Description of Greece 2. 29. 1 (trans. Jones) (Greek travelogue C2nd A.D.)
- [10] Homer, Iliad 4. 193 & 217 ff (trans. Lattimore) (Greek epic C8th B.C.)
- [11] Homer, Iliad 11. 518 ff (trans. Lattimore) (Greek epic C8th B.C.)
- [12] Homer, Iliad 2. 730 ff (trans. Lattimore) (Greek epic C8th B.C.)
- [13] Lycophron, Alexandra 1047 ff (trans. Mair) (Greek poet C3rd B.C.)
- [14] Diodorus Siculus, Library of History 4. 71. 3 (trans. Oldfather) (Greek historian C1st B.C.)
- [15] Philodemus, On Piety (trans. Campbell, Vol. Greek Lyric IV Stesichorus Frag 147 & Cinesias Frag 774) (C7th to 6th B.C.)
- [16] Apollodorus, Bibliotheca 3. 121 (trans. Aldrich) (Greek mythographer C2nd A.D.)
- [17] Apollonius Rhodius, Argonautica 4. 610 ff (trans. Rieu) (Greek epic C3rd B.C.)
- [18] Hyginus, Fabulae 49 (trans. Grant) (Roman mythographer C2nd A.D.)
- [19] Hyginus, Astronomica 2. 14 Latin Mythography C2nd A.D.
- [20] Sigerist, Chapter 3, *Religious medicine: Asclepius and his cult*, p. 63ff.
- [21] Farnell, Chapter 10, "The Cult of Asklepios" (pp.234-279)
- [22] Lucian, Alexander the False Prophet (trans A.M. Harmon) (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, 1936), Lucian, vol IV. Accessible online at http://www.tertullian.org/rpearse/lucian/lucian_alexander.htm
- [23] CCEL.org (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.viii.ii.xl.html?highlight=giant#highlight>) Dialogue of Justin and Trypho (the Jew) (69-70)
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Erechtheus

Erechtheus (Ἐρεχθίδης; Greek: Ἐρεχθεύς) in Greek mythology was the name of an archaic king of Athens, the re-founder of the *polis* and a double at Athens for Poseidon, as "Poseidon Erechtheus". A mythic Erechtheus and an Erechtheus given a human genealogy and set in a historicizing context—if they ever were really distinguished by Athenians—were harmonized as one in Euripides' lost tragedy *Erechtheus*, (423/22 BCE) . The name Erichthonius is carried by a son of Erechtheus, but Plutarch conflated the two names in the myth of the begetting of Erechtheus.^[1]

Athenians thought of themselves as *Erechtheidai*, the "sons of Erechtheus".^[2] In Homer's *Iliad* (2. 547–48) he is the son of "grain-giving Earth", reared by Athena.^[3] The earth-born son was sired by Hephaestus, whose semen Athena wiped from her thigh with a fillet of wool cast to earth, by which Gaia was made pregnant.

In the contest for patronship of Athens between Poseidon and Athena, the salt spring on the Acropolis where Poseidon's trident struck was known as the *sea of Erechtheus*.^[4]

Erechtheus and the Erechtheum/Erechtheion

The central gods of the Athenian acropolis were *Poseidon Erechtheus* and *Athena Polias*, "Athena patron-guardian of the city".^[5] The *Odyssey* (VII.81) already records that Athena returned to Athens and "*entered the strong-built house of Erechtheus*". The archaic joint temple built upon the spot that was identified as the *Kekropion*, the hero-grave of the mythic founder-king Cecrops^[6] and the serpent that embodied his spirit was destroyed by the Persian forces in 480 BC, during the Greco-Persian wars, and was replaced between 421 and 407 BCE by the famous present Erechtheum. Continuity of the site made sacred by the presence of Cecrops is inherent in the reference in Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* to "Erechtheion lamp as "the lamp of Cecrops".^[7] Priests of the Erechtheum and the priestess of Athena jointly took part in the procession to Skira that inaugurated the Skira festival near the end of the Athenian year. Their object was the *temenos* at Skiron of the hero-seer Skiros, who had aided Eumolpus in the war between Athens and Eleusis in which Erechtheus II, the hero-king, was both triumphant and died.

That Poseidon and Erechtheus were two names at Athens for the same figure (see below) was demonstrated in the cult at the Erechtheum, where there was a single altar, a single priest and sacrifices were dedicated to *Poseidon erechtheus*, Walter Burkert observed,^[8] adding "An historian would say that a Homeric, pan-Hellenic name has been superimposed on an autochthonous, non-Greek name."

Erechtheus II, king of Athens

The second Erechtheus was given a historicizing genealogy as son and heir to King Pandion I of Athens by Zeuxippe, this Pandion being son of Erichthonius. This later king Erechtheus may be distinguished as Erechtheus II. Erechtheus was father, by his wife Praxithea, of several daughters: Procris, Creusa, Chthonia and Oreithyia.

According to pseudo-Apollodorus, Erechtheus II had a twin brother named Butes who married Erechtheus' daughter Chthonia, the "earth-born". Erechtheus and Butes divided the royal power possessed by Pandion, Erechtheus taking the physical rule but Butes taking the priesthood of Athena and Poseidon, this right being passed on to his descendants. This late origin myth or *aition* justified and validated the descent of the hereditary priesthood of the Boutidai family.

The war with Eleusis

His reign was marked by the war between Athens and Eleusis, when the Eleusinians were commanded by Eumolpus, coming from Thrace. An oracle declared that Athens' survival depended on the death one of the three daughters of Erechtheus. Perhaps three unmarried daughters is meant. But in one version it is Chthonia who is sacrificed. In another both Protogeneia and Pandora, the two eldest, offer themselves up. In any case the remaining sisters (excepting Orithyia who had been kidnapped by Boreas), or at least some of them, are said to kill themselves. The story of the unfortunate daughters of Erechtheus is comparable to those of the daughters of Hyacinthus of Lacedaemon, and of the daughters of Leos.

In the following battle between the forces of Athens and Eleusis, Erechtheus won the battle and slew Eumolpus, but then himself fell, struck down by Poseidon's trident;^[9] according to fragments of Euripides' tragedy *Erechtheus*. Poseidon avenged his son Eumolpus' death by driving him into the earth with blows of his trident,^[10]

The ending lines of Euripides' tragedy were recovered in 1965 from a papyrus fragment.^[11] They demonstrate for Walter Burkert^[12] that "the founding of the Erechtheum and the institution of the priestess of Athena coincide." Athena resolves the action by instructing Erichtheus' widow Praxithea:

...and for your husband I command a shrine to be constructed in the middle of the city; he will be known for him who killed him, under the name of 'sacred Poseidon'; but among the citizens, when the sacrificial cattle are slaughtered, he shall also be called 'Erechtheus'. To you, however, since you have rebuilt the city's foundations,^[13] I grant the duty of bringing in the preliminary fire-sacrifices for the city, and to be called my priestess.^[14]

In the Athenian king-list, Xuthus, the son-in-law of Erechtheus, was asked to choose his successor from among his many sons and chose Cecrops II, named for the mythic founder-king Cecrops. Thus Erechtheus is succeeded by Cecrops II, his brother, according to a fragment from the poet Castor but his son according to pseudo-Apollodorus (3.15.1).

Other sons of Erechtheus sometimes mentioned are Orneus, Metion, Pandorus, Thespius, and Eupalamus.

Notes

[1] Plutarch, *Moralia* 843b.

[2] Euripides, *Medea*, 824.

[3] R. M. Frazer, Jr, "Some Notes on the Athenian Entry, Iliad B 546-56" *Hermes* 97.3 (1969), pp. 262-266, observes in this displacement a submerged memory of Athena's lost role as a mother-goddess "by becoming strictly a virgin". (p 262); compare Wolfgang Fauth, *Der Kleine Pauly* (1954), s.v. "Athena"; a contrasting view is Martin P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion*, vol I, pt 2 (Munich, 1955) pp 442ff.

[4] pseudo-Apollodorus, 3.14.1, noted by Karl Kerényi, *The Heroes of the Greeks*, (1959), p. 211; Kerényi narrates myths of Erechtheus pp 21-46.

[5] Walter Burkert, (Peter Bing, tr.) *Homo Necans* 1983:144 remarked of the Skira procession "The priests are those of the central gods of the Acropolis: Poseidon-Erechtheus and Athena Polias".

[6] That the Erechtheion is built on the site of the "alleged tomb, the Kekropion" is noted in passing even in a work as general as Karl Kerényi, *The Heroes of the Greeks*, 1959:213. The Kekropion is securely identified as lying beneath the Porch of the Maidens of the existing Erechtheum. The imprint of a small but vanished enclosure against the east foundation was analyzed by Holland, in *American Journal of Archaeology* (AJA) 28 1924:161f. No foundations for an actual temple structure have been discovered beneath the Erechtheum itself: William Bell Dinsmoor summarizes the archaeology in "The Hekatompedon on the Athenian Acropolis" *AJA* V51.2 (April-June 1947:109 note 4, 120 note 59.

[7] Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 33.124, noted by Olga Palagia, "A Niche for Kallimachos' Lamp?" *American Journal of Archaeology*, 88.4 (October 1984:515-521) p. 519 and note 15.

[8] Walter Burkert, (Peter Bing, tr.) *Homo Necans* 1983, p. 149 gives references for this observation.

[9] The alternative, that Zeus slew him with a thunderbolt at Poseidon's request, simply sets the action at a remove, magnifying a universal role for Zeus.

[10] Euripides, *Ion*, 281. Another figure who was killed by driving him into the earth by repeated blows was Caeneus the Lapith.

[11] Colin Austin, in *Recherches de Papyrologie* 4 (1967); *Nova fragmenta Euripidea* (1968) frs.65.90-97.

[12] Burkert, (Peter Bing, tr.) *Homo Necans* (1983) p. 149.

[13] Praxithea ("cult of the Goddess") had assented to the sacrifice of her own daughter before the battle.

[14] Peter Bing's English rendering of Walter Burkert's translation.

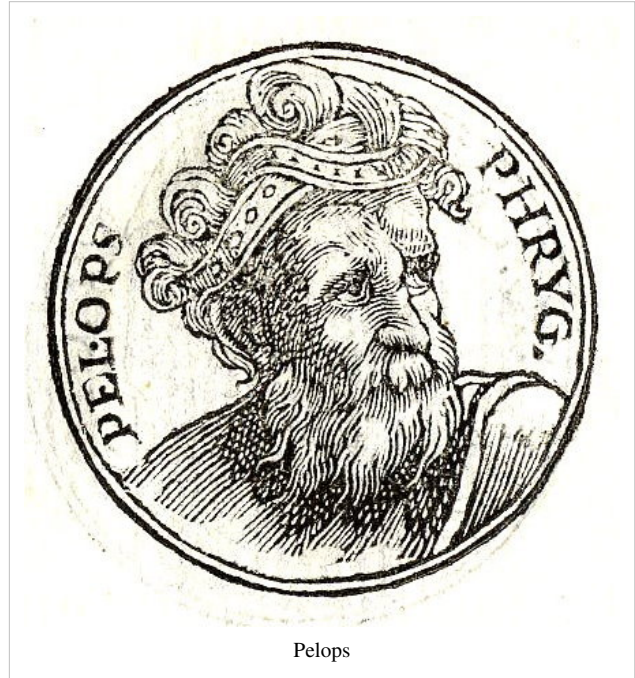
Pelops

In Greek mythology, **Pelops** (Greek Πέλοψ, from *pelios*: dark; and *ops*: face, eye), was king of Pisa in the Peloponnesus. He was the founder of the House of Atreus through his son of that name.

He was venerated at Olympia, where his cult developed into the founding myth of the Olympic Games, the most important expression of unity, not only for the Peloponnesus, "island of Pelops", but for all Hellenes. At the sanctuary at Olympia, chthonic night-time libations were offered each time to "dark-faced" Pelops in his sacrificial pit (*bothros*) before they were offered in the following daylight to the sky-god Zeus (Burkert 1983:96).

Genealogy

Pelops was a son of Tantalus and either Dione, Euryanassa or Eurythemista. Of Phrygian or Lydian birth, he departed his homeland for Greece, and won the crown of Pisa or Olympia from King Oenomaus. Pelops was credited with numerous children, begotten on his wife Hippodameia, daughter of Oenomaus. Pelops' sons include Pittheus, Troezen, Alcathous, Dimoetes, Pleisthenes, Atreus, Thyestes, Copeus, Hippalcimus, Cleones and Letreus. Pelops and Hippodameia also had several daughters, some of whom married into the House of Perseus, such as Astydameia (who married Alcaeus), Nicippe (who married Sthenelus), and Eurydice (who married Electryon). By the nymph Axioche (Ἀξιόχη)^[1] or Danais^[2] Pelops was father of Chrysippus.



Pelops

Tantalus' savage banquet

Pelops' father was Tantalus, king at Mount Sipylus in Anatolia. Wanting to make an offering to the Olympians, Tantalus cut Pelops into pieces and made his flesh into a stew, then served it to the gods. Demeter, deep in grief after the abduction of her daughter Persephone by Hades, absentmindedly accepted the offering and ate the left shoulder. The other gods sensed the plot, however, and held off from eating of the boy's body. Pelops was ritually reassembled and brought back to life, his shoulder replaced with one of ivory made for him by Hephaestus. Pindar mentioned this tradition in his First Olympian Ode, only to reject it as a malicious invention: his patron claimed descent from Tantalus.

After Pelops' resurrection, Poseidon took him to Olympus, and made the youth apprentice, teaching him also to drive the divine chariot. Later, Zeus threw Pelops out of Olympus, angry that his father, Tantalus, had stolen the food of the gods, given it to his subjects, and revealed the secrets of the gods.

Courting Hippodamia

Having grown to manhood, Pelops wanted to marry Hippodamia. King Oenomaus, her father, fearful of a prophecy that claimed he would be killed by his son-in-law, had killed twelve suitors of Hippodamia after defeating them in a chariot race and affixed their heads to the wooden columns of his palace. Pausanias was shown what was purported to be the last standing column in the late second century CE. Pelops came to ask for her hand and prepared to race Oenomaus. Worried about losing, Pelops went to the seaside and invoked Poseidon, his former lover.^[3] Reminding Poseidon of their love ("Aphrodite's sweet gifts"), he asked Poseidon for help. Smiling, Poseidon caused a chariot drawn by untamed winged horses to appear.^[4]

Two episodes involving charioteers were added into the plain account of the heroic chariot race. In the first related by Theopompus, having received the horses, Pelops hastens to Pisa to defeat Oenomaus. On the way, his charioteer Cillus (*also named Sphaerus*) dies and stands in a dream over Pelops, who was highly distressed about him, to make requests for a funeral. Pelops complies by burying his ashes magnificently, and raises a mound to erect a temple dedicated to Apollo which he names Apollo Cillaeus and he founds a city besides the mound and the temple which he also names Cilla after his charioteer and friend. Both the temple and the city are mentioned in the first book of Homer's *Iliad* and suggestions regarding their exact location have been made. Furthermore, Cillus, even after his death, appears to have helped Pelops' cause in order for him to win the race.^[5]

In the second, Pelops, still unsure of himself (or alternatively, Hippodamia herself) and of the winged horses and chariot of divine provenance he had secured, convinced Oenomaus' charioteer, Myrtilus, a son of Hermes, to help him win. Pelops or Hippodamia herself convinced Myrtilus by promising him half of Oenomaus' kingdom and the first night in bed with Hippodamia. The night before the race, while Myrtilus was putting together Oenomaus' chariot, he replaced the bronze linchpins attaching the wheels to the chariot axle with fake ones made of beeswax. The race started, and went on for a long time. But just as Oenomaus was catching up to Pelops and readying to kill him, the wheels flew off and the chariot broke apart. Myrtilus survived, but Oenomaus was dragged to death by his horses. Pelops then killed Myrtilus (by throwing him off a cliff into the sea) after the latter attempted to rape Hippodamia.

Walter Burkert notes^[6] that though the story of Hippodamia's abduction figures in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* and on the chest of Cypselus (c. 570 BCE) that was conserved at Olympia, and though preparations for the chariot-race figured in the east pediment of the great temple of Zeus at Olympia, the myth of the chariot race only became important at Olympia with the introduction of chariot racing in the twenty-fifth Olympiad (680 BCE). G. Devereux connected the abduction of Hippodamia with animal husbandry taboos of Elis,^[7] and the influence of Elis at Olympia that grew in the seventh century.

Curse of the Pelopidai

As Myrtilus died, he cursed Pelops for his ultimate betrayal. This was one of the sources of the curse that destroyed his family: two of his sons, Atreus and Thyestes, killed a third, Chrysippus, who was his favorite son and was meant to inherit the kingdom; Atreus and Thyestes were banished by him together with Hippodamia, their mother, who then hanged herself; each successive generation of descendants suffered greatly by atrocious crimes and compounded the curse by committing more crimes, as the curse weighed upon Pelops' children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren including Atreus, Thyestes, Agamemnon, Aegisthus, Menelaus, and finally Orestes, who was acquitted by a court of law convened by the gods Athena and Apollo. Although commonly referred to as "the curse of the Atreides", the circle of atrocious events began two generations before Atreus and continued for two generations after him, before being formally absolved by the Furies in court.

Pelops' *cultus*

The shrine of Pelops at Olympia, the *Pelopion* "drenched in glorious blood",^[8] described by Pausanias^[9] stood apart from the temple of Zeus, next to Pelops' grave-site by the ford in the river. It was enclosed with a circle of stones. Pelops was propitiated as a chthonic deity, at night with the offering of a black ram. His remains were contained in a chest near the sanctuary of Artemis Kordax (Pausanias 6.22.1), though in earlier times a gigantic shoulder blade was shown; during the Trojan War, John Tzetzes said, Pelops' shoulder-blade was brought to Troy by the Greeks because the Trojan prophet Helenus claimed the Pelopids would be able to win by doing so.^[10] Pausanias was told the full story: the shoulder-blade of Pelops was brought to Troy from Pisa, the rival of Elis; on the return, the bone was lost in a shipwreck, but afterwards recovered by a fisherman, miraculously caught in his net.^[11]

Giant-sized bones were and are often found in Greece, the remains of gigantic prehistoric animals. In ancient times there was obviously no knowledge of dinosaurs or mammoths, and such findings were believed to be actual remains of legendary heroes or demigods, and to reflect the supposedly supernatural stature of humans of the long-bygone Heroic Age. The bones' provenance was then determined according to local legends about ancient burials, with political expedience also playing a major role, helped along by convenient dreams, visions or priestly auguries.

Pelops, son of Agamemnon

There is another **Pelops** in Greek mythology. This was a son of Agamemnon and Cassandra. This Pelops, carrying the ancestral name, and his twin brother Teledamus (destined to have been "far-ruling"), the very emblems of the Pelopides, were murdered in their infancy by the usurper Aegisthus.

Pelops image gallery



"Throne of Pelops" at Yankkaya locality in Mount Sipylus



Pelops racing for Hippodamia standing next to him in a base relief (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Notes

- [1] Scholia on Euripides, *Orestes*, 4; on Pindar, *Olympian Ode*, 1. 144
- [2] Pseudo-Plutarch, *Greek and Roman Parallel Stories*, 33
- [3] Pindar, *First Olympian Ode*. 71.
- [4] Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 2.27.67 (noted in Kerenyi 1959:64).
- [5] Gordon S. Shrimpton (1991). *Theopompus the Historian* ISBN 978-0-7735-0837-8. McGill-Queen's University Press.
- [6] Burkert, *Homo Necans* 1983, p 95f.
- [7] G. Devereux, "The abduction of Hippodameia as 'aiton' of a Greek animal husbandry rite" '**SMSR**36' (1965), pp 3-25. Burkert, in following Devereux's thesis, attests Herodotus iv.30, Plutarch's *Greek Questions* 303b and Pausanias 5.5.2.
- [8] Pindar, *First Olympian Ode*.
- [9] Pausanias, 5.13.1-3.
- [10] Adrienne Mayor, *The First Fossil Hunters: Paleontology in Greek and Roman Times* (Princeton University Press, 2000) discusses the uses made of giant fossil bones in Greek cult and myth.
- [11] Pausanias 5.13.4.

Ancient sources

- Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VI, 403-11
- *Bibliotheca*, Epitome II, 3-9; V, 10
- Pindar, *Olympian Ode* I
- Sophocles, *Electra* 504 and *Oinomaos* Fr. 433
- Euripides, *Orestes* 1024-1062
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- Hyginus, *Fables*: 84 - Oenomaus
- Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 5.1.3-7, 5.13.1, 6.21.9, 8.14.10-11
- Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines* 1.30 - Pelops
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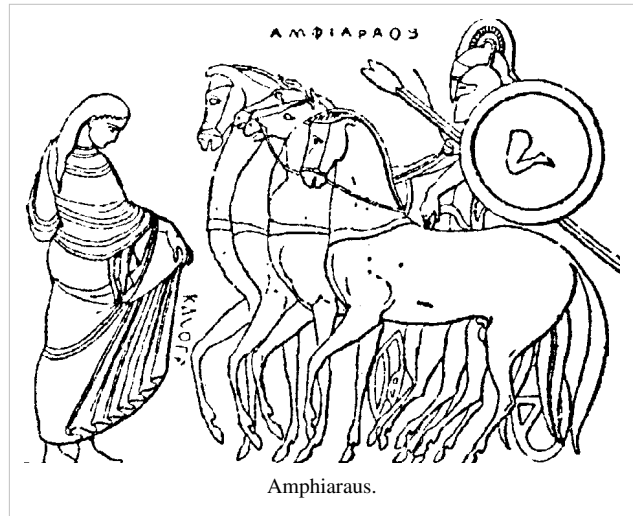
External links

- The sacrifice of Pelops, a fully developed story (<http://www.haidukpress.com/tantalus/index.html>) compiled from selected primary sources to highlight the shamanic and Promethean aspects of the tale. By Pindar's time this view would have been rejected.

Amphiaraus

In Greek mythology, **Amphiaraus** (or **Amphiaraos**, "doubly cursed" or "twice Ares-like"^[1]) was the son of Oecles and Hypermnestra, and husband of Eriphyle. Amphiaraus was the King of Argos along with Adrastus—the brother of Amphiaraus' wife, Eriphyle—and Iphis. Amphiaraus was a seer, and greatly honored in his time. Both Zeus and Apollo favored him, and Zeus gave him his oracular talent. In the generation before the Trojan War, Amphiaraos was one of the heroes present at the Calydonian Boar Hunt.^[2]

The material of the tragic war of the Seven Against Thebes was taken up from several points-of-view by each of the three great Greek tragic poets. Eriphyle persuaded Amphiaraus to take part in the raiding venture, against his better judgment, for he knew he would die.^[3] She had been persuaded by Polynices, who offered her the necklace of Harmonia, daughter of Aphrodite, once part of the bride-price of Cadmus, as a bribe for her advocacy. Amphiaraus reluctantly agreed to join the doomed undertaking, but aware of his wife's corruption, asked his sons, Alcmaeon and Amphilochus to avenge his inevitably coming death by killing her, should he not return. On the way to the battle, Amphiaraus repeatedly warned the other warriors that the expedition would fail,^[4] and blamed Tydeus for starting it. He would eventually prevent Tydeus from being immortalized by Athena because of this. Despite this, he was possibly the greatest leader in the attack. During the battle, Amphiaraus killed Melanippus. In the battle, Amphiaraus sought to flee from Periclymenus, the "very famous"^[5] son of Poseidon, who wanted to kill him, but Zeus threw his thunderbolt, and the earth opened to swallow Amphiaraus together with his chariot.^[6] Thus chthonic hero Amphiaraus was propitiated and consulted at his sanctuary.



Marble votive relief of a chariot race, from Oropos, beginning of the 4th century BCE (Pergamonmuseum, Berlin).

Alcmaeon killed his mother when Amphiaraus died. He was pursued by the Erinyes as he fled across Greece, eventually landing the court of King Phegeus, who gave him his daughter Alpheisiboea in marriage. Exhausted, Alcmaeon asked an oracle how to avoid the Erinyes and was told that he needed to stop where the sun was not shining when he killed his mother. That was the mouth of the river Achelous, which had been silted up. Achelous himself, god of that river, promised him his daughter, Callirrhoe in marriage if Alcmaeon would retrieve the necklace and clothes which Eriphyle wore when she persuaded Amphiaraus to take part in the battle. Alcmaeon had given these jewels to Phegeus who had his sons kill Alcmaeon when he discovered Alcmaeon's plan.

In a sanctuary at the Amphiareion of Oropos, northwest of Attica, Amphiaraus was worshipped with a hero cult. He was considered a healing and fortune-telling god and was associated with Asclepius. The healing and fortune-telling aspect of Amphiaraus came from his ancestry: he was related to the great seer Melampus. After making a sacrifice of a few coins, or sometimes a ram, at the temple, a petitioner slept inside^[7] and received a dream detailing the solution to the problem.

Etruscan tradition inherited by the Romans is doubtless the origin of a son for Amphiaraus named Catillus who escaped from the slaughter at Thebes and led an expedition to Italy, where he founded a colony where eventually

appeared the city of Tibur (now Tivoli), named after his eldest son Tiburtus.

In certain traditions he was said to have had a daughter, Alexida.

References

- [1] Karl Kerényi, *The Heroes of the Greeks* 1959:296.
- [2] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliothēke*, 1.8.2: "Atalanta was the first to shoot the boar in the back with an arrow, and Amphiaraus was the next to shoot it in the eye; but Meleager killed it by a stab in the flank..."; it was not arbitrarily nor by chance that Amphiaraus the seer shot the boar in the eye.
- [3] *Bibliothēke*, 3.8.2.
- [4] Apollodorus. *Bibliothēke*, 3.6.2.
- [5] Karl Kerényi (*The Heroes of the Greeks*, 1959, p. 300) noted that the name would also be a suitable epithet for Hades.
- [6] Pindar, Ninth Nemean Ode.
- [7] See Incubation (ritual).

Akademios

Akademios (Ancient Greek: Ἀκάδημος) (or **Hekademios** (Ἑκάδημος), **Academus**, or **Hecademus**) was an Attic hero in Greek mythology. The tale traditionally told of him is that when Castor and Pollux invaded Attica to liberate their sister Helen, he betrayed to them that she was kept concealed at Aphidnae. For this reason the Tyndarids always showed him much gratitude, and whenever the Lacedaemonians invaded Attica, they always spared the land belonging to Akademios which lay on the Cephissus, six stadia from Athens.^{[1][2]} This piece of land was subsequently adorned with plane and olive plantations,^[3] and was called Academia from its original owner.^[4]

His name was linked to the archaic name for the site of Plato's Academy, the *Hekademeia*, outside the walls of Athens. The site was sacred to Athena, the goddess of wisdom, and other immortals; it had sheltered her religious cult since the Bronze Age, which was perhaps associated with the hero-gods, the Dioskouroi (Castor and Polydeukes), for the hero Akademios associated with the site was credited with revealing to the Divine Twins where Theseus had hidden Helen of Troy. By classical times the name of the place had evolved into the *Akademeia*. Its sacred grove furnished the olive oil that was distributed as prizes in the Panathenaic Games and contained in the finely decorated Panathenaic amphorae presented to the winners.

Akademeia was the source of the word "*academy*". The expression "the Grove of Academe" refers to the sacred site of Hekademios where the cult had once taken place in an olive grove sacred to Athena.

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- [1] Plutarch, *Theseus* 32
- [2] Diogenes Laërtius iii. L § 9
- [3] Plutarch, *Cimon* 13
- [4] Schmitz, Leonhard (1867), "Academus" (<http://www.ancientlibrary.com/smith-bio/0014.html>), in Smith, William, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, **1**, Boston, pp. 5,

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Alexander the Great

Alexander the Great	
Alexander fighting the Persian king Darius III of PersiaDarius III. From Alexander Mosaic, Naples National Archaeological Museum	
Alexander fighting the Persian king Darius III. From Alexander Mosaic, Naples National Archaeological Museum	
King of Macedonia	
Reign	336–323 BC
Predecessor	Philip II of Macedon
	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Alexander IVPhilip III of Macedon</div>
Pharaoh of Egypt	
Reign	332–323 BC
Predecessor	Darius III
Successor	Alexander IV Philip III
King of Persia	
Reign	330–323 BC
Predecessor	Darius III
Successor	Alexander IV Philip III
Spouse	Roxana of Bactria Stateira II of Persia Parysatis II of Persia
Issue	
Alexander IV	
Full name	
Alexander III of Macedon	
Father	Philip II of Macedon
Mother	Olympias of Epirus
Born	20 or 21 July 356 BC Pella, Macedon
Died	10 or 11 June 323 BC (aged 32) Babylon
Religion	Greek polytheism

Alexander III of Macedon (20/21 July 356 – 10/11 June 323 BC), commonly known as **Alexander the Great** (Greek: Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Μέγας, *Aléxandros ho Mégas*^{iii[1]} from the Greek ἀλέξω *alexo* "to defend, help" + ἀνὴρ *aner* "man"), was a king of Macedon, a state in northern ancient Greece. Born in Pella in 356 BC, Alexander was tutored by Aristotle until the age of 16. By the age of thirty, he had created one of the largest empires of the ancient world, stretching from the Ionian Sea to the Himalayas.^[1] He was undefeated in battle and is considered one of history's most successful commanders.^[2]

Alexander succeeded his father, Philip II of Macedon, to the throne in 336 BC after Philip was assassinated. Upon Philip's death, Alexander inherited a strong kingdom and an experienced army. He was awarded the generalship of Greece and used this authority to launch his father's military expansion plans. In 334 BC, he invaded Persian-ruled Asia Minor and began a series of campaigns that lasted ten years. Alexander broke the power of Persia in a series of decisive battles, most notably the battles of Issus and Gaugamela. He subsequently overthrew the Persian King Darius III and conquered the entirety of the Persian Empire.^[1] At that point, his empire stretched from the Adriatic Sea to the Indus River.

Seeking to reach the "ends of the world and the Great Outer Sea", he invaded India in 326 BC, but was eventually forced to turn back at the demand of his troops. Alexander died in Babylon in 323 BC, without executing a series of planned campaigns that would have begun with an invasion of Arabia. In the years following his death, a series of civil wars tore his empire apart, resulting in several states ruled by the Diadochi, Alexander's surviving generals and heirs.

Alexander's legacy includes the cultural diffusion his conquests engendered. He founded some twenty cities that bore his name, most notably Alexandria in Egypt. Alexander's settlement of Greek colonists and the resulting spread of Greek culture in the east resulted in a new Hellenistic civilization, aspects of which were still evident in the traditions of the Byzantine Empire in the mid-15th century. Alexander became legendary as a classical hero in the mold of Achilles, and he features prominently in the history and myth of Greek and non-Greek cultures. He became the measure against which military leaders compared themselves, and military academies throughout the world still teach his tactics.^{[3][ii]}

Early life

Lineage and childhood

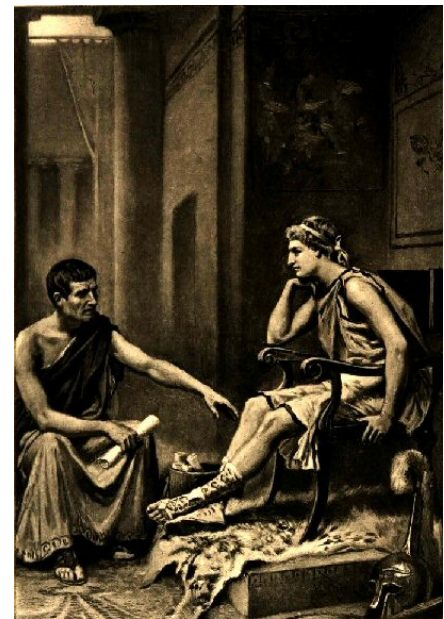
Alexander was born on the 6th day of the ancient Greek month of Hekatombaion, which probably corresponds to 20 July 356 BC, although the exact date is not known,^[4] in Pella, the capital of the Ancient Greek Kingdom of Macedon.^[5] He was the son of the king of Macedon, Philip II, and his fourth wife, Olympias, the daughter of Neoptolemus I, king of Epirus.^{[6][7][8]} Although Philip had seven or eight wives, Olympias was his principal wife for some time, likely a result of giving birth to Alexander.^[9]

Several legends surround Alexander's birth and childhood.^[10] According to the ancient Greek biographer Plutarch, Olympias, on the eve of the consummation of her marriage to Philip, dreamed that her womb was struck by a thunder bolt, causing a flame that spread "far and wide" before dying away. Some time after the wedding, Philip is said to have seen himself, in a dream, securing his wife's womb with a seal engraved with a lion's image.^[11] Plutarch offered a variety of interpretations of these dreams: that Olympias was pregnant before her marriage, indicated by the sealing of her womb; or that Alexander's father was Zeus. Ancient commentators were divided about whether the ambitious Olympias promulgated the story of Alexander's divine parentage, variously claiming that she had told Alexander, or that she dismissed the suggestion as impious.^[11]



Bust of a young Alexander the Great from the Hellenistic era, British Museum

On the day that Alexander was born, Philip was preparing a siege on the city of Potidea on the peninsula of Chalcidice. That same day, Philip received news that his general Parmenion had defeated the combined Illyrian and Paeonian armies, and that his horses had won at the Olympic Games. It was also said that on this day, the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, burnt down. This led Hegesias of Magnesia to say that it had burnt down because Artemis was away, attending the birth of Alexander.^{[7][12]} Such legends may have emerged when Alexander was king, and possibly at his own instigation, to show that he was superhuman and destined for greatness from conception.^[10]



Aristotle tutoring Alexander, by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris



A statue showing Alexander taming Bucephalus in Edinburgh

In his early years, Alexander was raised by a nurse, Lanike, sister of Alexander's future general Cleitus the Black. Later in his childhood, Alexander was tutored by the strict Leonidas, a relative of his mother, and by Philip's general Lysimachus.^[13] Alexander was raised in the manner of noble Macedonian youths, learning to read, play the lyre, ride, fight, and hunt.^[14]

When Alexander was ten years old, a trader from Thessaly brought Philip a horse, which he offered to sell for thirteen talents. The horse refused to be mounted and Philip ordered it away. Alexander however, detecting the horse's fear of its own shadow, asked to tame the horse,

which he eventually managed.^[10] Plutarch stated that Philip, overjoyed at this display of courage and ambition, kissed his son tearfully, declaring: "My boy, you must find a kingdom big enough for your ambitions. Macedon is too small for you", and bought the horse for him.^[15] Alexander named it Bucephalus, meaning "ox-head". Bucephalus carried Alexander as far as India. When the animal died (due to old age, according to Plutarch, at age thirty), Alexander named a city after him, Bucephala.^{[8][16][17]}

Adolescence and education

When Alexander was 13, Philip began to search for a tutor, and considered such academics as Isocrates and Speusippus, the latter offering to resign to take up the post. In the end, Philip chose Aristotle and provided the Temple of the Nymphs at Mieza as a classroom. In return for teaching Alexander, Philip agreed to rebuild Aristotle's hometown of Stageira, which Philip had razed, and to repopulate it by buying and freeing the ex-citizens who were slaves, or pardoning those who were in exile.^{[18][19][20]}

Mieza was like a boarding school for Alexander and the children of Macedonian nobles, such as Ptolemy, Hephaestion, and Cassander. Many of these students would become his friends and future generals, and are often known as the 'Companions'. Aristotle taught Alexander and his companions about medicine, philosophy, morals, religion, logic, and art. Under Aristotle's tutelage, Alexander developed a passion for the works of Homer, and in particular the *Iliad*; Aristotle gave him an annotated copy, which Alexander later carried on his campaigns.^{[18][21][22]}

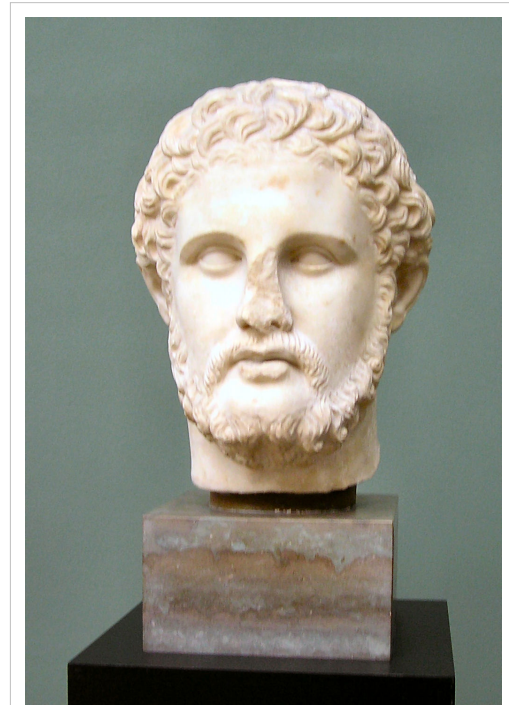
Philip's heir

Regency and ascent of Macedon

At age 16, Alexander's education under Aristotle ended. Philip waged war against Byzantium, leaving Alexander in charge as regent and heir apparent.^[10] During Philip's absence, the Thracian Maedi revolted against Macedonia. Alexander responded quickly, driving them from their territory. He colonized it with Greeks, and founded a city named Alexandropolis.^{[23][24][25]}

Upon Philip's return, he dispatched Alexander with a small force to subdue revolts in southern Thrace. Campaigning against the Greek city of Perinthus, Alexander is reported to have saved his father's life. Meanwhile, the city of Amphissa began to work lands that were sacred to Apollo near Delphi, a sacrilege that gave Philip the opportunity to further intervene in Greek affairs. Still occupied in Thrace, he ordered Alexander to muster an army for a campaign in Greece. Concerned that other Greek states might intervene, Alexander made it look as though he was preparing to attack Illyria instead. During this turmoil, the Illyrians invaded Macedonia, only to be repelled by Alexander.^[26]

Philip and his army joined his son in 338 BC, and they marched south through Thermopylae, taking it after stubborn resistance from its Theban garrison. They went on to occupy the city of Elatea, only a few days' march from both Athens and Thebes. The Athenians, led by Demosthenes, voted to seek alliance with Thebes against Macedonia. Both Athens and Philip sent embassies to win Thebes' favor, but Athens won the contest.^{[27][28][29]} Philip marched on Amphissa (ostensibly acting on the request of the Amphictyonic League), capturing the mercenaries sent there by Demosthenes and accepting the city's surrender. Philip then returned to Elatea, sending a final offer of peace to Athens and Thebes, who both rejected it.^{[30][31][32]}



Philip II of Macedon, Alexander's father.

As Philip marched south, his opponents blocked him near Chaeronea, Boeotia. During the ensuing Battle of Chaeronea, Philip commanded the right wing and Alexander the left, accompanied by a group of Philip's trusted generals. According to the ancient sources, the two sides fought bitterly for some time. Philip deliberately commanded his troops to retreat, counting on the untested Athenian hoplites to follow, thus breaking their line. Alexander was the first to break the Theban lines, followed by Philip's generals. Having damaged the enemy's cohesion, Philip ordered his troops to press forward and quickly routed them. With the Athenians lost, the Thebans were surrounded. Left to fight alone, they were defeated.^[33]

After the victory at Chaeronea, Philip and Alexander marched unopposed into the Peloponnese, welcomed by all cities; however, when they reached Sparta, they were refused, but did not resort to war.^[34] At Corinth, Philip established a "Hellenic Alliance" (modeled on the old anti-Persian alliance of the Greco-Persian Wars), which included most Greek city-states except Sparta. Philip was then named *Hegemon* (often translated as "Supreme Commander") of this league (known by modern scholars as the League of Corinth), and announced his plans to attack the Persian Empire.^{[35][36]}



Statue of Alexander in Istanbul Archaeology Museum.

Exile and return

When Philip returned to Pella, he fell in love with and married Cleopatra Eurydice, the niece of his general Attalus.^[37] The marriage made Alexander's position as heir less secure, since any son of Cleopatra Eurydice would be a fully Macedonian heir, while Alexander was only half-Macedonian.^[38] During the wedding banquet, a drunken Attalus publicly prayed to the gods that the union would produce a legitimate heir.^[37]

At the wedding of Cleopatra, whom Philip fell in love with and married, she being much too young for him, her uncle Attalus in his drink desired the Macedonians would implore the gods to give them a lawful successor to the kingdom by his niece. This so irritated Alexander, that throwing one of the cups at his head, "You villain," said he, "what, am I then a bastard?" Then Philip, taking Attalus's part, rose up and would have run his son through; but by good fortune for them both, either his over-hasty rage, or the wine he had drunk, made his foot slip, so that he fell down on the floor. At which Alexander reproachfully insulted over him: "See there," said he, "the man who makes preparations to pass out of Europe into Asia, overturned in passing from one seat to another."

—Plutarch, describing the feud at Philip's wedding.^[39]

Alexander fled Macedon with his mother, dropping her off with her brother, King Alexander I of Epirus in Dodona, capital of the Molossians.^[40] He continued to Illyria,^[40] where he sought refuge with the Illyrian King and was treated as a guest, despite having defeated them in battle a few years before. However, it appears Philip never intended to disown his politically and militarily trained son.^[40] Accordingly, Alexander returned to Macedon after six months due to the efforts of a family friend, Demaratus the Corinthian, who mediated between the two parties.^{[41][42]}

In the following year, the Persian satrap (governor) of Caria, Pixodarus, offered his eldest daughter to Alexander's half-brother, Philip Arrhidaeus.^[40] Olympias and several of Alexander's friends suggested this showed Philip intended to make Arrhidaeus his heir.^[40] Alexander reacted by sending an actor, Thessalus of Corinth, to tell Pixodarus that he should not offer his daughter's hand to an illegitimate son, but instead to Alexander. When Philip

heard of this, he stopped the negotiations and scolded Alexander for wishing to marry the daughter of a Carian, explaining that he wanted a better bride for him.^[40] Philip exiled four of Alexander's friends, Harpalus, Nearchus, Ptolemy and Erigyius, and had the Corinthians bring Thessalus to him in chains.^{[38][43][44]}

King of Macedon

Accession

In 336 BC, while at Aegae attending the wedding of his daughter Cleopatra to Olympias's brother, Alexander I of Epirus, Philip was assassinated by the captain of his bodyguards, Pausanias.^{vi[7]} As Pausanias tried to escape, he tripped over a vine and was killed by his pursuers, including two of Alexander's companions, Perdikkas and Leonnatus. Alexander was proclaimed king by the nobles and army at the age of 20.^{[45][46][47]}

Consolidation of power

Alexander began his reign by eliminating potential rivals to the throne. He had his cousin, the former Amyntas IV, executed.^[48] He also had two Macedonian princes from the region of Lyncestis killed, but spared a third, Alexander Lyncestes. Olympias had Cleopatra Eurydice and Europa, her daughter by Philip, burned alive. When Alexander learned about this, he was furious. Alexander also ordered the murder of Attalus,^[48] who was in command of the advance guard of the army in Asia Minor and Cleopatra's uncle.^[49]

Attalus was at that time corresponding with Demosthenes, regarding the possibility of defecting to Athens. Attalus also had severely insulted Alexander, and following Cleopatra's murder, Alexander may have considered him too dangerous to leave alive.^[49] Alexander spared Arrhidaeus, who was by all accounts mentally disabled, possibly as a result of poisoning by Olympias.^{[45][47][50]}

News of Philip's death roused many states into revolt, including Thebes, Athens, Thessaly, and the Thracian tribes north of Macedon. When news of the revolts reached Alexander, he responded quickly. Though advised to use diplomacy, Alexander mustered the Macedonian cavalry of 3,000 and rode south towards Thessaly. He found the Thessalian army occupying the pass between Mount Olympus and Mount Ossa, and ordered his men to ride over Mount Ossa. When the Thessalians awoke the next day, they found Alexander in their rear and promptly surrendered, adding their cavalry to Alexander's force. He then continued south towards the Peloponnese.^{[51][52][53][54]}

Alexander stopped at Thermopylae, where he was recognized as the leader of the Amphictyonic League before heading south to Corinth. Athens sued for peace and Alexander pardoned the rebels. The famous encounter between Alexander and Diogenes the Cynic occurred during Alexander's stay in Corinth. When Alexander asked Diogenes what he could do for him, the philosopher disdainfully asked Alexander to stand a little to the side, as he was blocking the sunlight.^[55] This reply apparently delighted Alexander, who is reported to have said "But verily, if I were not Alexander, I would like to be Diogenes."^[56] At Corinth Alexander took the title of *Hegemon* ("leader"), and



The Kingdom of Macedon in 336 BC.

like Philip, was appointed commander for the coming war against Persia. He also received news of a Thracian uprising.^{[52][57]}

Balkan campaign

Before crossing to Asia, Alexander wanted to safeguard his northern borders. In the spring of 335 BC, he advanced to suppress several revolts. Starting from Amphipolis, he traveled east into the country of the "Independent Thracians"; and at Mount Haemus, the Macedonian army attacked and defeated the Thracian forces manning the heights.^[58] The Macedonians marched into the country of the Triballi, and defeated their army near the Lyginus river^[59] (a tributary of the Danube). Alexander then marched for three days to the Danube, encountering the Getae tribe on the opposite shore. Crossing the river at night, he surprised them and forced their army to retreat after the first cavalry skirmish.^{[60][61]}

News then reached Alexander that Cleitus, King of Illyria, and King Glaukias of the Taulanti were in open revolt against his authority. Marching west into Illyria, Alexander defeated each in turn, forcing the two rulers to flee with their troops. With these victories, he secured his northern frontier.^{[62][63]}

While Alexander campaigned north, the Thebans and Athenians rebelled once again. Alexander immediately headed south.^[64] While the other cities again hesitated, Thebes decided to fight. The Theban resistance was ineffective, and Alexander razed the city and divided its territory between the other Boeotian cities. The end of Thebes cowed Athens, leaving all of Greece temporarily at peace.^[64] Alexander then set out on his Asian campaign, leaving Antipater as regent.^[65]

Conquest of the Persian Empire

Asia Minor

Further information: Battle of the Granicus, Siege of Halicarnassus, and Siege of Miletus

Alexander's army crossed the Hellespont in 334 BC with approximately 48,100 soldiers, 6,100 cavalry and a fleet of 120 ships with crews numbering 38,000,^[64] drawn from Macedon and various Greek city-states, mercenaries, and feudally-raised soldiers from Thrace, Paionia, and Illyria.^[66] He showed his intent to conquer the entirety of the Persian Empire by throwing a spear into Asian soil and saying he accepted Asia as a gift from the gods.^[64] This also showed Alexander's eagerness to fight, in contrast to his father's preference for diplomacy.^[64]



Map of Alexander's empire and his route.

After an initial victory against Persian forces at the Battle of the Granicus, Alexander accepted the surrender of the Persian provincial capital and treasury of Sardis and proceeded along the Ionian coast.^[67] At Halicarnassus, in Caria, Alexander successfully waged the first of many sieges, eventually forcing his opponents, the mercenary captain Memnon of Rhodes and the Persian satrap of Caria, Orontobates, to withdraw by sea.^[68] Alexander left the government of Caria to Ada, who adopted Alexander.^[69]

From Halicarnassus, Alexander proceeded into mountainous Lycia and the Pamphylian plain, asserting control over all coastal cities to deny the Persians naval bases. From Pamphylia onwards the coast held no major ports and

Alexander moved inland. At Termessos, Alexander humbled but did not storm the Pisidian city.^[70] At the ancient Phrygian capital of Gordium, Alexander "undid" the hitherto unsolvable Gordian Knot, a feat said to await the future "king of Asia".^[71] According to the story, Alexander proclaimed that it did not matter how the knot was undone and hacked it apart with his sword.^[72]

The Levant and Syria

Further information: Battle of Issus and Siege of Tyre

After spending the winter campaigning in Asia Minor, Alexander's army crossed the Cilician Gates in 333 BC, and defeated the main Persian army under the command of Darius III at the Battle of Issus in November.^[73] Darius fled the battle, causing his army to collapse, and left behind his wife, his two daughters, his mother Sisygambis, and a fabulous treasure.^[74] He offered a peace treaty that included the lands he had already lost, and a ransom of 10,000 talents for his family. Alexander replied that since he was now king of Asia, it was he alone who decided territorial divisions.^[75]



Detail of Alexander Mosaic, showing Battle of Issus, from the House of the Faun, Pompeii.

Alexander proceeded to take possession of Syria, and most of the coast of the Levant.^[69] In the following year, 332 BC, he was forced to attack Tyre, which he captured after a long and difficult siege.^{[76][77]} Alexander massacred the men of military age and sold the women and children into slavery.^[78]

Egypt

Further information: Siege of Gaza

When Alexander destroyed Tyre, most of the towns on the route to Egypt quickly capitulated, with the exception of Gaza. The stronghold at Gaza was heavily fortified and built on a hill, requiring a siege.^[79] After three unsuccessful assaults, the stronghold fell, but not before Alexander had received a serious shoulder wound. As in Tyre, men of military age were put to the sword and the women and children sold into slavery.^[80]

Jerusalem instead opened its gates in surrender, and according to Josephus, Alexander was shown the book of Daniel's prophecy, presumably chapter 8, which described a mighty Greek king who would conquer the Persian Empire. He spared Jerusalem and pushed south into Egypt.^[81]



Name of Alexander the Great in Egyptian hieroglyphs (written from right to left), circa 330 BC, Egypt. Louvre Museum.

Alexander advanced on Egypt in later 332 BC, where he was regarded as a liberator.^[82] He was pronounced the new "master of the Universe" and son of the deity of Amun at the Oracle of Siwa Oasis in the Libyan desert.^[83] Henceforth, Alexander often referred to Zeus-Ammon as his true father, and subsequent currency depicted him adorned with rams horn as a symbol of his divinity.^[84] During his stay in Egypt, he founded Alexandria-by-Egypt, which would become the prosperous capital of the Ptolemaic Kingdom after his death.^[85]

Assyria and Babylonia

Further information: Battle of Gaugamela

Leaving Egypt in 331 BC, Alexander marched eastward into Mesopotamia (now northern Iraq) and again defeated Darius, at the Battle of Gaugamela.^[86] Darius once more fled the field, and Alexander chased him as far as Arbela. Gaugamela would be the final and decisive encounter between the two. Darius fled over the mountains to Ecbatana (modern Hamedan), while Alexander captured Babylon.^[87]

Persia

Further information: Battle of the Persian Gate

From Babylon, Alexander went to Susa, one of the Achaemenid capitals, and captured its legendary treasury.^[87] He sent the bulk of his army to the Persian ceremonial capital of Persepolis via the Royal Road. Alexander himself took selected troops on the direct route to the city. He had to storm the pass of the Persian Gates (in the modern Zagros Mountains) which had been blocked by a Persian army under Ariobarzanes and then hurried to Persepolis before its garrison could loot the treasury.^[88]

On entering Persepolis, Alexander allowed his troops to loot the city for several days.^[89] Alexander stayed in Persepolis for five months.^[90] During his stay a fire broke out in the eastern palace of Xerxes and spread to the rest of the city. Possible causes include a drunken accident or deliberate revenge for the burning of the Acropolis of Athens during the Second Persian War.^[91]

Fall of the Empire and the East

Alexander then chased Darius, first into Media, and then Parthia.^[92] The Persian king no longer controlled his own destiny, and was taken prisoner by Bessus, his Bactrian satrap and kinsman.^[93] As Alexander approached, Bessus had his men fatally stab the Great King and then declared himself Darius' successor as Artaxerxes V, before retreating into Central Asia to launch a guerrilla campaign against Alexander.^[94] Alexander buried Darius' remains next to his Achaemenid predecessors in a regal funeral.^[95] He claimed that, while dying, Darius had named him as his successor to the Achaemenid throne.^[96] The Achaemenid Empire is normally considered to have fallen with Darius.^[97]

Alexander viewed Bessus as a usurper and set out to defeat him. This campaign, initially against Bessus, turned into a grand tour of central Asia. Alexander founded a series of new cities, all called Alexandria, including modern Kandahar in Afghanistan, and Alexandria Eschate ("The Furthest") in modern Tajikistan. The campaign took Alexander through Media, Parthia, Aria (West Afghanistan), Drangiana, Arachosia (South and Central Afghanistan), Bactria (North and Central Afghanistan), and Scythia.^[98]



Silver coin of Alexander wearing the lion scalp of Herakles, British Museum.

Spitamenes, who held an undefined position in the satrapy of Sogdiana, in 329 BC betrayed Bessus to Ptolemy, one of Alexander's trusted companions, and Bessus was executed.^[99] However, when, at some point later, Alexander was on the Jaxartes dealing with an incursion by a horse nomad army, Spitamenes raised Sogdiana in revolt. Alexander personally defeated the Scythians at the Battle of Jaxartes and immediately launched a campaign against Spitamenes, defeating him in the Battle of Gabai. After the defeat, Spitamenes was killed by his own men, who then sued for peace.^[100]

Problems and plots

During this time, Alexander took the Persian title "King of Kings" (*Shahanshah*) and adopted some elements of Persian dress and customs at his court, notably the custom of *proskynesis*, either a symbolic kissing of the hand, or prostration on the ground, that Persians showed to their social superiors.^[101] The Greeks regarded the gesture as the province of deities and believed that Alexander meant to deify himself by requiring it. This cost him the sympathies of many of his countrymen, and he eventually abandoned it.^[102]

A plot against his life was revealed, and one of his officers, Philotas, was executed for failing to alert Alexander. The death of the son necessitated the death of the father, and thus Parmenion, who had been charged with guarding the treasury at Ecbatana, was assassinated at Alexander's command, to prevent attempts at vengeance. Most infamously, Alexander personally killed the man who had saved his life at Granicus, Cleitus the Black, during a drunken argument at Maracanda.^[103]

Later, in the Central Asian campaign, a second plot against his life was revealed, this one instigated by his own royal pages. His official historian, Callisthenes of Olynthus, was implicated in the plot; however, historians have yet to reach consensus regarding this involvement. Callisthenes had fallen out of favor by leading the opposition to the attempt to introduce *proskynesis*.^[104]

Macedon in Alexander's absence

When Alexander set out for Asia, he left his general Antipater, an experienced military and political leader and part of Philip II's "Old Guard", in charge of Macedon.^[65] Alexander's sacking of Thebes ensured that Greece remained quiet during his absence.^[65] The one exception was a call to arms by Spartan king Agis III in 331 BC, whom Antipater defeated and killed in battle at Megalopolis the following year.^[65] Antipater referred the Spartans' punishment to Alexander, who chose to pardon them.^[105] There was also considerable friction between Antipater and Olympias, and each complained to Alexander about the other.^[106]

In general, Greece enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity during Alexander's campaign in Asia.^[107] Alexander sent back vast sums from his conquest, which stimulated the economy and increased trade across his empire.^[108] However, Alexander's constant demands for troops and the migration of Macedonians throughout his empire depleted Macedon's manpower, greatly weakening it in the years after Alexander, and ultimately led to its subjugation by Rome.^[14]

Indian campaign

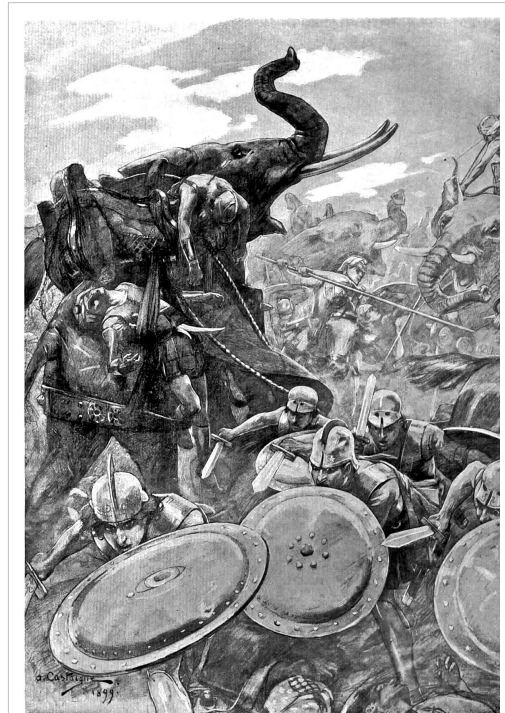
Invasion of the Indian subcontinent

After the death of Spitamenes and his marriage to Roxana (Roshanak in Bactrian) to cement relations with his new satrapies, Alexander turned to the Indian subcontinent. He invited the chieftains of the former satrapy of Gandhara, in the north of what is now Pakistan, to come to him and submit to his authority. Omphis, ruler of Taxila, whose kingdom extended from the Indus to the Hydaspes, complied, but the chieftains of some hill clans, including the Aspasioi and Assakenoi sections of the Kambojas (known in Indian texts also as Ashvayanas and Ashvakayanas), refused to submit.^[109]

In the winter of 327/326 BC, Alexander personally led a campaign against these clans; the Aspasioi of Kunar valleys, the Guraeans of the Guraeus valley, and the Assakenoi of the Swat and Buner valleys.^[110] A fierce contest ensued with the Aspasioi in which Alexander was wounded in the shoulder by a dart, but eventually the Aspasioi lost. Alexander then faced the Assakenoi, who fought in the strongholds of Massaga, Ora and Aornos.^[109]

The fort of Massaga was reduced only after days of bloody fighting, in which Alexander was wounded seriously in the ankle. According to Curtius, "Not only did Alexander slaughter the entire population of Massaga, but also did he reduce its buildings to rubble".^[111] A similar slaughter followed at Ora. In the aftermath of Massaga and Ora, numerous Assakenians fled to the fortress of Aornos. Alexander followed close behind and captured the strategic hill-fort after four bloody days.^[109]

After Aornos, Alexander crossed the Indus and fought and won an epic battle against King Porus, who ruled a region in the Punjab, in the Battle of the Hydaspes in 326 BC.^[112] Alexander was impressed by Porus's bravery, and made him an ally. He appointed Porus as satrap, and added to Porus' territory land that he did not previously own. Choosing a local helped him control these lands so distant from Greece.^[113] Alexander founded two cities on opposite sides of the Hydaspes river, naming one Bucephala, in honor of his horse, who died around this time.^[114] The other was Nicaea (Victory) located at the site of modern day Mong, Punjab.^[115]



The phalanx attacking the centre in the battle of the Hydaspes by Andre Castaigne (1898–1899)

Revolt of the army

East of Porus' kingdom, near the Ganges River, were the Nanda Empire of Magadha and further east the Gangaridai Empire of Bengal. Fearing the prospect of facing other large armies and exhausted by years of campaigning, Alexander's army mutinied at the Hyphasis River, refusing to march farther east. This river thus marks the easternmost extent of Alexander's conquests.^[116]

As for the Macedonians, however, their struggle with Porus blunted their courage and stayed their further advance into India. For having had all they could do to repulse an enemy who mustered only twenty thousand infantry and two thousand horse, they violently opposed Alexander when he insisted on crossing the river Ganges also, the width of which, as they learned, was thirty-two furlongs, its depth a hundred fathoms, while its banks on the further side were covered with multitudes of men-at-arms and horsemen and elephants. For they were

told that the kings of the Ganderites and Praesii were awaiting them with eighty thousand horsemen, two hundred thousand footmen, eight thousand chariots, and six thousand war elephants.^[117]

Alexander tried to persuade his soldiers to march farther, but his general Coenus pleaded with him to change his opinion and return; the men, he said, "longed to again see their parents, their wives and children, their homeland". Alexander eventually agreed and turned south, marching along the Indus. Along the way his army conquered the Malli clans (in modern day Multan) and other Indian tribes.^[118]

Alexander sent much of his army to Carmania (modern southern Iran) with general Craterus, and commissioned a fleet to explore the Persian Gulf shore under his admiral Nearchus, while he led the rest back to Persia through the more difficult southern route along the Gedrosian Desert and Makran (now part of southern Iran and Pakistan).^[119] Alexander reached Susa in 324 BC, but not before losing many men to the harsh desert.^[120]



Alexander's invasion of the Indian subcontinent.

Last years in Persia

Discovering that many of his satraps and military governors had misbehaved in his absence, Alexander executed several of them as examples on his way to Susa.^{[121][122]} As a gesture of thanks, he paid off the debts of his soldiers, and announced that he would send over-aged and disabled veterans back to Macedon, led by Craterus. His troops misunderstood his intention and mutinied at the town of Opis. They refused to be sent away and criticized his adoption of Persian customs and dress and the introduction of Persian officers and soldiers into Macedonian units.^[123]



Alexander, left, and Hephaestion, right

After three days, unable to persuade his men to back down, Alexander gave Persians command posts in the army and conferred Macedonian military titles upon Persian units. The Macedonians quickly begged forgiveness, which Alexander accepted, and held a great banquet for several thousand of his men at which he and they ate together.^[124] In an attempt to craft a lasting harmony between his Macedonian and Persian subjects, Alexander held a mass marriage of his senior officers to Persian and other noblewomen at Susa, but few of those marriages seem to have lasted much beyond a year.^[122] Meanwhile, upon his return, Alexander learned that guards of the tomb of Cyrus the Great had desecrated it, and swiftly executed them.^[125]

After Alexander traveled to Ecbatana to retrieve the bulk of the Persian treasure, his closest friend and possible lover, Hephaestion, died of illness or poisoning.^{[126][127]} Hephaestion's death devastated Alexander, and he ordered the preparation of an expensive funeral pyre in Babylon, as well as a decree for public mourning.^[126] Back in Babylon, Alexander planned a series of new campaigns, beginning with an invasion of Arabia, but he would not have a chance to realize them, as he died shortly thereafter.^[128]

Death and succession

On either 10 or 11 June 323 BC, Alexander died in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar II, in Babylon, at age 32.^[129] Details of the death differ slightly – Plutarch's account is that roughly 14 days before his death, Alexander entertained admiral Nearchus, and spent the night and next day drinking with Medius of Larissa.^[41]

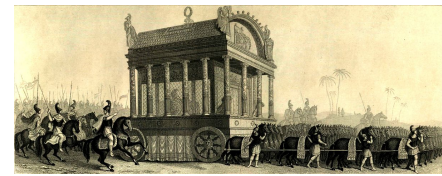
He developed a fever, which worsened until he was unable to speak. The common soldiers, anxious about his health, were granted the right to file past him as he silently waved at them.^[130] Diodorus recounts that Alexander was struck with pain after downing a large bowl of unmixed wine in honour of Hercules, and died after some agony.^[131] Arrian also mentioned this as an alternative, but Plutarch specifically denied this claim.^[41]



A Babylonian astronomical diary (c. 323–322 BC) recording the death of Alexander (British Museum, London)

Given the propensity of the Macedonian aristocracy to assassination,^[132] foul play featured in multiple accounts of his death. Diodorus, Plutarch, Arrian and Justin all mentioned the theory that Alexander was poisoned. Plutarch dismissed it as a fabrication,^[133] while both Diodorus and Arrian noted that they mentioned it only for the sake of completeness.^{[131][134]}

The accounts were nevertheless fairly consistent in designating Antipater, recently removed as Macedonian viceroy, and at odds with Olympias, as the head of the alleged plot. Perhaps taking his summons to Babylon as a death sentence,^[135] and having seen the fate of Parmenion and Philotas,^[136] Antipater purportedly arranged for Alexander to be poisoned by his son Iollas, who was Alexander's wine-pourer.^{[134][136]} There was even a suggestion that Aristotle may have participated.^[134]



Nineteenth century depiction of Alexander's funeral procession based on the description of Diodorus

The strongest argument against the poison theory is the fact that twelve days passed between the start of his illness and his death; such long-acting poisons were probably not available.^[137] In 2010, however, a new theory proposed that the circumstances of his death were compatible with poisoning by water of the river Styx (Mavroneri) that contained calicheamicin, a dangerous compound produced by bacteria.^[138]

Several natural causes (diseases) have been suggested, including malaria and typhoid fever. A 1998 article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* attributed his death to typhoid fever complicated by bowel perforation and ascending paralysis.^[139] Another recent analysis suggested pyrogenic spondylitis or meningitis.^[140] Other illnesses fit the symptoms, including acute pancreatitis and West Nile virus.^{[141][142]}

Natural-cause theories also tend to emphasise that Alexander's health may have been in general decline after years of heavy drinking and severe wounds. The anguish that Alexander felt after Hephaestion's death may also have contributed to his declining health.^[139] The most likely possible cause is an overdose of medication containing hellebore, which is deadly in large doses.^{[143][144]}

After death

Alexander's body was laid in a gold anthropoid sarcophagus, which was in turn placed in a gold casket.^[145] According to Aelian, a seer called Aristander foretold that the land where Alexander was laid to rest "would be happy and unvanquishable forever".^[146] Perhaps more likely, the successors may have seen possession of the body as a symbol of legitimacy, since burying the prior king was a royal prerogative.^[147]

While Alexander's funeral cortege was on its way to Macedon, Ptolemy stole it and took it to Memphis.^{[145][146]} His successor, Ptolemy II

Philadelphus, transferred the sarcophagus to Alexandria, where it remained until at least late Antiquity. Ptolemy IX Lathyros, one of Ptolemy's final successors, replaced Alexander's sarcophagus with a glass one so he could convert the original to coinage.^[148]

Pompey, Julius Caesar and Augustus all visited the tomb in Alexandria. The latter allegedly accidentally knocked the nose off the body. Caligula was said to have taken Alexander's breastplate from the tomb for his own use. In c. AD 200, Emperor Septimius Severus closed Alexander's tomb to the public. His son and successor, Caracalla, a great admirer, visited the tomb during his own reign. After this, details on the fate of the tomb are hazy.^[148]

The so-called "Alexander Sarcophagus", discovered near Sidon and now in the Istanbul Archaeology Museum, is so named not because it was thought to have contained Alexander's remains, but because its bas-reliefs depict Alexander and his companions fighting the Persians and hunting. It was originally thought to have been the



Detail of Alexander on the Alexander Sarcophagus.

sarcophagus of Abdalonymus (died 311 BC), the king of Sidon appointed by Alexander immediately following the battle of Issus in 331.^{[149][150]} However, more recently, it has been suggested that it may date from earlier than Abdalonymus' death.

Division of the empire

Further information: Diadochi

Alexander's death was so sudden that when reports of his death reached Greece, they were not immediately believed.^[65] Alexander had no obvious or legitimate heir, his son Alexander IV by Roxane being born after Alexander's death.^[151] According to Diodorus, Alexander's companions asked him on his deathbed to whom he bequeathed his kingdom; his laconic reply was "τῶι κρατίστῳ"—"to the strongest".^[131]

Arrian and Plutarch claimed that Alexander was speechless by this point, implying that this was an apocryphal story.^[152] Diodorus, Curtius and Justin offered the more plausible story that Alexander passed his signet ring to Perdiccas, a bodyguard and leader of the companion cavalry, in front of witnesses, thereby nominating him.^{[131][151]}

Perdiccas initially did not claim power, instead suggesting that Roxane's baby would be king, if male; with himself, Craterus, Leonnatus, and Antipater as guardians. However, the infantry, under the command of Meleager, rejected this arrangement since they had been excluded from the discussion. Instead, they supported Alexander's half-brother Philip Arrhidaeus. Eventually, the two sides reconciled, and after the birth of Alexander IV, he and Philip III were appointed joint kings, albeit in name only.^[153]

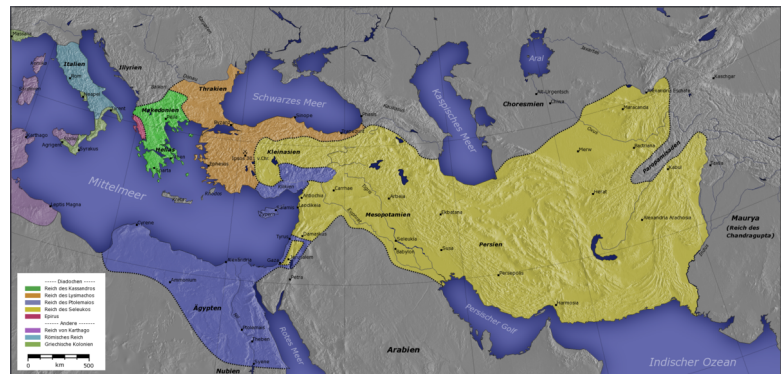
Dissension and rivalry soon afflicted the Macedonians, however. The satrapies handed out by Perdiccas at the Partition of Babylon became power bases each general used to bid for power. After the assassination of Perdiccas in 321 BC, Macedonian unity collapsed, and 40 years of war between "The Successors" (*Diadochi*) ensued before the Hellenistic world settled into four stable power blocks: the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt, the Seleucid Empire in the east, the Kingdom of Pergamon in Asia Minor, and Macedon. In the process, both Alexander IV and Philip III were murdered.^[154]

Testament

Diodorus stated that Alexander had given detailed written instructions to Craterus some time before his death.^[155] Craterus started to carry out Alexander's commands, but the successors chose not to further implement them, on the grounds they were impractical and extravagant.^[155] Nevertheless, Perdiccas read Alexander's will to his troops.^[65]

The testament called for military expansion into the southern and western Mediterranean, monumental constructions, and the intermixing of Eastern and Western populations. It included:

- Construction of a monumental tomb for his father Philip, "to match the greatest of the pyramids of Egypt"^[65]
- Erection of great temples in Delos, Delphi, Dodona, Dium, Amphipolis, and a monumental temple to Athena at Troy^[65]
- Conquest of Arabia and the entire Mediterranean Basin^[65]



Kingdoms of the Diadochi in 281 BC: the Ptolemaic Kingdom (dark blue), the Seleucid Empire (yellow), Kingdom of Pergamon (orange), and Macedonia (green). Also show are the Roman Republic (light blue), the Carthaginian Republic (purple), and the Kingdom of Epirus (red).

- Circumnavigation of Africa^[65]
- Development of cities and the "transplant of populations from Asia to Europe and in the opposite direction from Europe to Asia, in order to bring the largest continent to common unity and to friendship by means of intermarriage and family ties."^[156]

Character

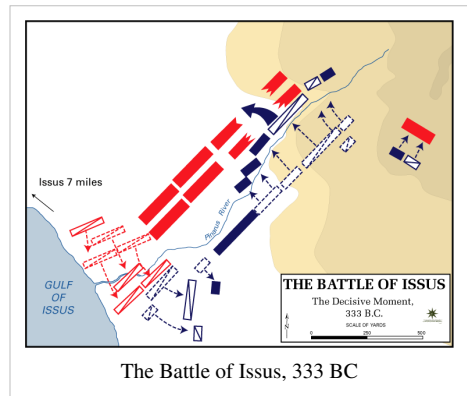
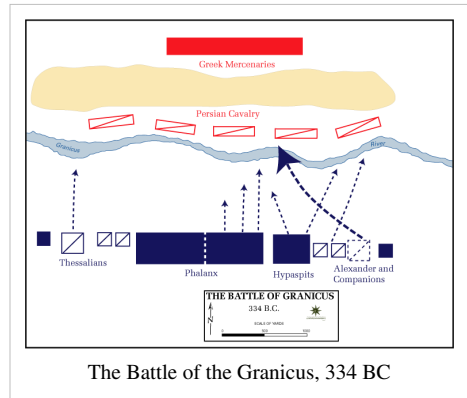
Generalship

Alexander earned the epithet "the Great" due to his unparalleled success as a military commander.^[64] He never lost a battle, despite typically being outnumbered.^[64] This was due to use of terrain, phalanx and cavalry tactics, bold strategy, and the fierce loyalty of his troops.^{[157][158]} The Macedonian phalanx, armed with the sarissa, a spear 6 metres (**unknown operator: u'strong'** ft) long, had been developed and perfected by Philip II through rigorous training,^[158] and Alexander used its speed and maneuverability to great effect against larger but more disparate Persian forces.^[158] Alexander also recognized the potential for disunity among his diverse army, which employed various languages and weapons. He overcame this by being personally involved in battle,^[90] in the manner of a Macedonian king.^{[157][158]}

In his first battle in Asia, at Granicus, Alexander used only a small part of his forces, perhaps 13,000 infantry with 5,000 cavalry, against a much larger Persian force of 40,000. Alexander placed the phalanx at the center and cavalry and archers on the wings, so that his line matched the length of the Persian cavalry line, about 3 km (**unknown operator: u'strong'** mi). By contrast, the Persian infantry was stationed behind its cavalry. This ensured that Alexander would not be outflanked, while his phalanx, armed with long pikes, had a considerable advantage over the Persian's scimitars and javelins. Macedonian losses were negligible compared to those of the Persians.^[159]

At Issus in 333 BC, his first confrontation with Darius, he used the same deployment, and again the central phalanx pushed through.^[159] Alexander personally led the charge in the center, routing the opposing army.^[157] At the decisive encounter with Darius at Gaugamela, Darius equipped his chariots with scythes on the wheels to break up the phalanx and equipped his cavalry with pikes. Alexander arranged a double phalanx, with the center advancing at an angle, parting when the chariots bore down and then reforming. The advance was successful and broke Darius' center, causing the latter to flee once again.^[159]

When faced with opponents who used unfamiliar fighting techniques, such as in Central Asia and India, Alexander adapted his forces to his opponents' style. Thus, in Bactria and Sogdiana, Alexander successfully used his javelin throwers and archers to prevent outflanking movements, while massing his cavalry at the center.^[157] In India, confronted by Porus' elephant corps, the Macedonians opened their ranks to envelop the elephants and used their sarissas to strike upwards and dislodge the elephants' handlers.^[124]



Physical appearance

Greek biographer Plutarch (ca. 45–120 AD) describes Alexander's appearance as:

¹ The outward appearance of Alexander is best represented by the statues of him which Lysippos made, and it was by this artist alone that Alexander himself thought it fit that he should be modelled. ² For those peculiarities which many of his successors and friends afterwards tried to imitate, namely, the poise of the neck, which was bent slightly to the left, and the melting glance of his eyes, this artist has accurately observed. ³ Apelles, however, in painting him as wielder of the thunder-bolt, did not reproduce his complexion, but made it too dark and swarthy. Whereas he was of a fair colour, as they say, and his fairness passed into ruddiness on his breast particularly, and in his face. ⁴ Moreover, that a very pleasant odour exhaled from his skin and that there was a fragrance about his mouth and all his flesh, so that his garments were filled with it, this we have read in the *Memoirs of Aristoxenus*.^[160]



Roman copy of a statue by Lysippos, Louvre Museum. Plutarch felt sculptures by Lysippos were the most faithful.

Greek historian Arrian (Lucius Flavius Arrianus 'Xenophon' ca. 86 – 160) described Alexander as:

[T]he strong, handsome commander with one eye dark as the night and one blue as the sky.^{[161][162]}

The semi-legendary *Alexander Romance* also suggests that Alexander suffered from heterochromia iridum: that one eye was dark and the other light.^[163]

British historian Peter Green provided a description of Alexander's appearance, based on his review of statues and some ancient documents:

Physically, Alexander was not prepossessing. Even by Macedonian standards he was very short, though stocky and tough. His beard was scanty, and he stood out against his hirsute Macedonian barons by going clean-shaven. His neck was in some way twisted, so that he appeared to be gazing upward at an angle. His eyes (one blue, one brown) revealed a dewy, feminine quality. He had a high complexion and a harsh voice.^[164]

Ancient authors recorded that Alexander was so pleased with portraits of himself created by Lysippos that he forbade other sculptors from crafting his image.^[165] Lysippos had often used the Contrapposto sculptural scheme to portray Alexander and other characters such as Apoxyomenos, Hermes and Eros.^[166] Lysippos' sculpture, famous for its naturalism, as opposed to a stiffer, more static pose, is thought to be the most faithful depiction.^[167]

Personality



Alexander (left) fighting an Asiatic lion with his friend Craterus (detail). 3rd century BC mosaic, Pella Museum.

Some of Alexander's strongest personality traits formed in response to his parents.^[164] His mother had huge ambitions, and encouraged him to believe it was his destiny to conquer the Persian Empire.^[164] Olympias' influence instilled a sense of destiny in him,^[168] and Plutarch tells us that his ambition "kept his spirit serious and lofty in advance of his years".^[169] However, his father Philip was Alexander's most immediate and influential role model, as the young Alexander watched him campaign practically every year, winning victory after victory while ignoring severe wounds.^[48] Alexander's relationship with

his father forged the competitive side of his personality; he had a need to out-do his father, illustrated by his reckless behavior in battle.^[164] While Alexander worried that his father would leave him "no great or brilliant achievement to be displayed to the world",^[170] he also downplayed his father's achievements to his companions.^[164]

According to Plutarch, among Alexander's traits were a violent temper and rash, impulsive nature,^[171] which undoubtedly contributed to some of his decisions.^[164] Although Alexander was stubborn and did not respond well to orders from his father, he was open to reasoned debate.^[172] He had a calmer side—perceptive, logical, and calculating. He had a great desire for knowledge, a love for philosophy, and was an avid reader.^[173] This was no doubt in part due to Aristotle's tutelage; Alexander was intelligent and quick to learn.^[164] His intelligent and rational side was amply demonstrated by his ability and success as a general.^[171] He had great self-restraint in "pleasures of the body", in contrast with his lack of self control with alcohol.^[174]

Alexander was erudite and patronized both arts and sciences.^{[169][173]} However, he had little interest in sports or the Olympic games (unlike his father), seeking only the Homeric ideals of honor (*timê*) and glory (*kudos*).^{[48][168]} He had great charisma and force of personality, characteristics which made him a great leader.^{[151][171]} His unique abilities were further demonstrated by the inability of any of his generals to unite Macedonia and retain the Empire after his death – only Alexander had the ability to do so.^[151]

During his final years, and especially after the death of Hephaestion, Alexander began to exhibit signs of megalomania and paranoia.^[135] His extraordinary achievements, coupled with his own ineffable sense of destiny and the flattery of his companions, may have combined to produce this effect.^[175] His delusions of grandeur are readily visible in his testament and in his desire to conquer the world.^[135]

He appears to have believed himself a deity, or at least sought to deify himself.^[135] Olympias always insisted to him that he was the son of Zeus,^[176] a theory apparently confirmed to him by the oracle of Amun at Siwa.^[177] He began to identify himself as the son of Zeus-Ammon.^[177] Alexander adopted elements of Persian dress and customs at court, notably *proskynesis*, a practice that Macedonians disapproved, and were loath to perform.^[101] This behavior cost him the sympathies of many of his countrymen.^[178] However, Alexander also was a pragmatic ruler who understood the difficulties of ruling culturally disparate peoples, many of whom lived in kingdoms where the king was divine.^{[102][179]} Thus, rather than megalomania, his behavior may simply have been a practical attempt at strengthening his rule and keeping his empire together.^{[90][179]}

Personal relationships

The central personal relationship of Alexander's life was with his friend, general, and bodyguard Hephaestion, the son of a Macedonian noble.^{[126][164][180]} Hephaestion's death devastated Alexander.^{[126][181]} This event may have contributed to Alexander's failing health and detached mental state during his final months.^{[135][139]}

Alexander married twice: Roxana, daughter of the Bactrian nobleman Oxyartes, out of love;^[182] and Stateira II, a Persian princess and daughter of Darius III of Persia, for political reasons.^[183] He apparently had two sons, Alexander IV of Macedon of Roxana and, possibly, Heracles of Macedon from his mistress Barsine. He lost another child when Roxana miscarried at Babylon.^{[184][185]}

Alexander's sexuality has been the subject of speculation and controversy.^[186] No ancient sources stated that Alexander had homosexual relationships, or that Alexander's relationship with Hephaestion was sexual. Aelian, however, writes of Alexander's visit to Troy where "Alexander garlanded the tomb of Achilles and Hephaestion that of Patroclus, the latter riddling that he was a beloved of Alexander, in just the same way as Patroclus was of Achilles".^[187]

Noting that the word *eromenos* (ancient Greek for beloved) does not necessarily bear sexual meaning, Alexander may have been bisexual, which in his time was not controversial.^[188]

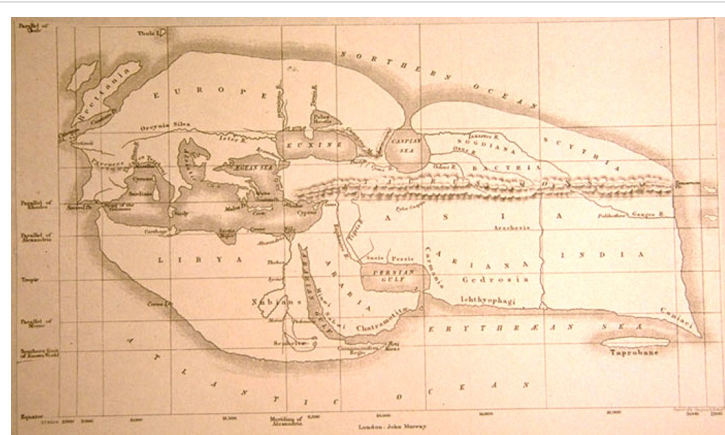
Green argues that there is little evidence in ancient sources that Alexander had much carnal interest in women; he did not produce an heir until the very end of his life.^[164] However, he was relatively young when he died, and Ogden suggests that Alexander's matrimonial record is more impressive than his father's at the same age.^[189] Apart from wives, Alexander had many more female companions. Alexander accumulated a harem in the style of Persian kings, but he used it rather sparingly,^[190] showing great self-control in "pleasures of the body".^[174] Nevertheless, Plutarch described how Alexander was infatuated by Roxana while complimenting him on not forcing himself on her.^[191] Green suggested that, in the context of the period, Alexander formed quite strong friendships with women, including Ada of Caria, who adopted him, and even Darius's mother Sisygambis, who supposedly died from grief upon hearing of Alexander's death.^[164]



A mural in Pompeii, depicting the marriage of Alexander to Barsine (Stateira) in 324 BC. The couple are apparently dressed as Ares and Aphrodite.

Legacy

Alexander's legacy extended beyond his military conquests. His campaigns greatly increased contacts and trade between East and West, and vast areas to the east were significantly exposed to Greek civilization and influence.^[14] Some of the cities he founded became major cultural centers, many surviving into the twenty-first century. His chroniclers recorded valuable information about the areas through which he marched, while the Greeks themselves got a sense of belonging to a world beyond the Mediterranean.^[14]



The Hellenistic world view after Alexander: ancient world map of Eratosthenes (276–194 BC), incorporating information from the campaigns of Alexander and his successors.^[192]

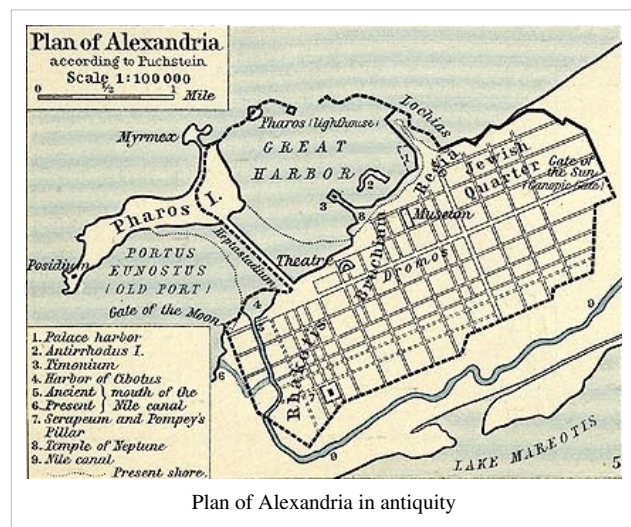
Hellenistic kingdoms

Alexander's most immediate legacy was the introduction of Macedonian rule to huge new swathes of Asia. At the time of his death, Alexander's empire covered some 5200000 km² (**unknown operator: u'strong' sq mi**),^[193] and was the largest state of its time. Many of these areas remained in Macedonian hands or under Greek influence for the next 200–300 years. The successor states that emerged were, at least initially, dominant forces, and these 300 years are often referred to as the Hellenistic period.^[194]

The eastern borders of Alexander's empire began to collapse even during his lifetime.^[151] However, the power vacuum he left in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent directly gave rise to one of the most powerful Indian dynasties in history. Taking advantage of this, Chandragupta Maurya (referred to in Greek sources as "Sandrokottos"), of relatively humble origin, took control of the Punjab, and with that power base proceeded to conquer the Nanda Empire.^[195]

Founding of cities

Over the course of his conquests, Alexander founded some twenty cities that bore his name, most of them east of the Tigris.^{[102][196]} The first, and greatest, was Alexandria in Egypt, which would become one of the leading Mediterranean cities.^[102] The cities locations' reflected trade routes as well as defensive positions. At first the cities must have been inhospitable, little more than defensive garrisons.^[102] Following Alexander's death, many Greeks who had settled there tried to return to Greece.^{[102][196]} However, a century or so after Alexander's death, many of the Alexandrias were thriving, with elaborate public buildings and substantial populations that included both Greek and local peoples.^[102]



Plan of Alexandria in antiquity

Hellenization

Hellenization was coined by the German historian Johann Gustav Droysen to denote the spread of Greek language, culture, and population into the former Persian empire after Alexander's conquest.^[194] That this export took place is undoubted, and can be seen in the great Hellenistic cities of, for instance, Alexandria, Antioch^[197] and Seleucia (south of modern Baghdad).^[198] Alexander sought to insert Greek elements into Persian culture and attempted to hybridize Greek and Persian culture. This culminated in his aspiration to homogenize the populations of Asia and Europe. However, his successors explicitly rejected such policies. Nevertheless, Hellenization occurred throughout the region, accompanied by a distinct and opposite 'Orientalization' of the Successor states.^{[197][199]}



Alexander's empire was the largest state of its time, covering approximately 5.2 million square km.

The core of Hellenistic culture was essentially Athenian.^{[197][200]} The close association of men from across Greece in Alexander's army directly led to the emergence of the largely Attic-based "koine", or "common" Greek dialect.^[201] Koine spread throughout the Hellenistic world, becoming the lingua franca of Hellenistic lands and eventually the ancestor of modern Greek.^[201] Furthermore, town planning, education, local government, and art current in the Hellenistic period were all based on Classical Greek ideals, evolving into distinct new forms commonly grouped as Hellenistic.^[197] Aspects of Hellenistic culture were still evident in the traditions of the Byzantine Empire in the mid-15th century.^{[202][203]}

Some of the most unusual effects of Hellenization can be seen in India, in the region of the relatively late-arising Indo-Greek kingdoms.^[204] There, isolated from Europe, Greek culture apparently hybridized with Indian, and especially Buddhist, influences. The first realistic portrayals of the Buddha appeared at this time; they were modeled on Greek statues of Apollo.^[204] Several Buddhist traditions may have been influenced by the ancient Greek religion: the concept of Bodhisatvas is reminiscent of Greek divine heroes,^[205] and some Mahayana ceremonial practices (burning incense, gifts of flowers, and food placed on altars) are similar to those practiced by the ancient Greeks. Zen Buddhism draws in part on the ideas of Greek stoics, such as Zeno.^[206] One Greek king, Menander I, probably became Buddhist, and was immortalized in Buddhist literature as 'Milinda'.^[204] The process of Hellenization extended to the sciences, where ideas from Greek astronomy filtered eastward and had profoundly influenced Indian astronomy by the early centuries AD.^[207] For example, Greek astronomical instruments dating to the 3rd century BC were found in the Greco-Bactrian city of Ai Khanoum in modern-day Afghanistan^[208] while the Greek concept of a spherical earth surrounded by the spheres of planets was adopted in India and eventually supplanted the long-standing Indian cosmological belief of a flat and circular earth.^{[207][209]} The Yavanajataka and Paulisa Siddhanta texts in particular show Greek influence.



The Buddha, in Greco-Buddhist style, 1st–2nd century AD, Gandhara (Modern Pakistan). Tokyo National Museum.

Influence on Rome

Alexander and his exploits were admired by many Romans, especially generals, who wanted to associate themselves with his achievements.^[210] Polybius began his *Histories* by reminding Romans of Alexander's achievements, and thereafter Roman leaders saw him as a role model. Pompey the Great adopted the epithet "Magnus" and even Alexander's anatole-type haircut, and searched the conquered lands of the east for Alexander's 260-year-old cloak, which he then wore as a sign of greatness.^[210] Julius Caesar dedicated a Lysippean equestrian bronze statue but replaced Alexander's head with his own, while Octavian visited Alexander's tomb in Alexandria and temporarily changed his seal from a sphinx to Alexander's profile.^[210] The emperor Trajan also admired Alexander, as did Nero and Caracalla.^[210] The Macriani, a Roman family that in the person of Macrinus briefly ascended to the imperial throne, kept images of Alexander on their persons, either on jewelry, or embroidered into their clothes.^[211]



The Greco-Bactrian king Demetrius (reigned c. 200–180 BC), wearing an elephant scalp, took over Alexander's legacy in the east by again invading India, and establishing the Indo-Greek kingdom (180 BC–10 AD).

On the other hand, some Roman writers, particularly Republican figures, used Alexander as a cautionary tale of how autocratic tendencies can be kept in check by republican values.^[212] Alexander was used by these writers as an example of ruler values such as *amicitia* (friendship) and *clementia* (clemency), but also *iracundia* (anger) and *cupiditas gloriae* (over-desire for glory).^[212]

Legend

Legendary accounts surround the life of Alexander the Great, many deriving from his own lifetime, probably encouraged by Alexander himself.^[213] His court historian Callisthenes portrayed the sea in Cilicia as drawing back from him in proskynesis. Writing shortly after Alexander's death, another participant, Onesicritus, invented a tryst between Alexander and Thalestris, queen of the mythical Amazons. When Onesicritus read this passage to his patron, Alexander's general and later King Lysimachus reportedly quipped, "I wonder where I was

at the time."^[214]

In the first centuries after Alexander's death, probably in Alexandria, a quantity of the legendary material coalesced into a text known as the *Alexander Romance*, later falsely ascribed to Callisthenes and therefore known as *Pseudo-Callisthenes*. This text underwent numerous expansions and revisions throughout Antiquity and the Middle Ages,^[215] containing many dubious stories,^[213] and was translated into numerous languages.^[216]

In ancient and modern culture

Alexander the Great's accomplishments and legacy have been depicted in many cultures. Alexander has figured in both high and popular culture beginning in his own era to the present day. The *Alexander Romance*, in particular, has had a significant impact on portrayals of Alexander in later cultures, from Persian to medieval European to modern Greek.^[216]

Alexander features prominently in modern Greek folklore, more so than any other ancient figure.^[217] The colloquial form of his name in modern Greek ("O Megalexandros") is a household name, and he is the only ancient hero to appear in the Karagiozis shadow play.^[217] One well-known fable among Greek seamen involves a solitary mermaid who would grasp a ship's prow during a storm and ask the captain "Is King Alexander alive?". The correct answer is "He is alive and well and rules the world!", causing the mermaid to vanish and the sea to calm. Any other answer would cause the mermaid to turn into a raging Gorgon who would drag the ship to the bottom of the sea, all hands aboard.^[217]

In pre-Islamic Persian (Zoroastrian) literature, Alexander is referred to by the epithet "gojastak", meaning "accursed", and is accused of destroying temples and burning the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism.^[218]

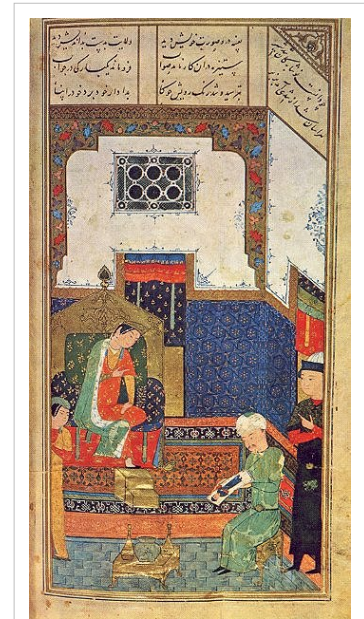


Alexander the Great depicted in a 14th century Byzantine manuscript

In Islamic Iran, under the influence of the *Alexander Romance*, a more positive portrayal of Alexander emerges.^[219] Firdausi's *Shahnameh* ("The Book of Kings") includes Alexander in a line of legitimate Iranian shahs, a mythical figure who explored the far reaches of the world in search of the fountain of youth.^[220] Later Persian writers associate him with philosophy, portraying him at a symposium with figures such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, in search of immortality.^[219]

The Syriac version of the *Alexander Romance* portrays him as an ideal Christian world conqueror who prayed to "the one true God".^[219] In Egypt, Alexander was portrayed as the son of Nectanebo II, the last pharaoh before the Persian conquest.^[221] His defeat of Darius was depicted as Egypt's salvation, "proving" Egypt was still ruled by an Egyptian.^[221]

The figure of Dhul-Qarnayn (literally "the Two-Horned One") mentioned in the Quran is believed by some scholars to represent Alexander, due to parallels with the *Alexander Romance*.^[219] In this tradition, he was a heroic figure who built a wall to defend against the nations of Gog and Magog.^[221] He then traveled the known world in search for the Water of Life and Immortality, eventually becoming a prophet.^[221]



15th century Persian miniature painting from Herat depicting Alexander the Great

In India and Pakistan, more specifically the Punjab, the name "Sikandar", derived from Persian, denotes a rising young talent.^[222] In medieval Europe he was made a member of the Nine Worthies, a group of heroes who encapsulated all the ideal qualities of chivalry.

Historiography

Apart from a few inscriptions and fragments, texts written by people who actually knew Alexander or who gathered information from men who served with Alexander were all lost.^[14] Contemporaries who wrote accounts of his life included Alexander's campaign historian Callisthenes; Alexander's generals Ptolemy and Nearchus; Aristobulus, a junior officer on the campaigns; and Onesicritus, Alexander's chief helmsman. Their works are lost, but later works based on these original sources have survived. The earliest of these is Diodorus Siculus (1st century BC), followed by Quintus Curtius Rufus (mid to late 1st century AD), Arrian (1st to 2nd century AD), the biographer Plutarch (1st to 2nd century AD), and finally Justin, whose work dated as late as the 4th century AD.^[14] Of these, Arrian is generally considered the most reliable, given that he used Ptolemy and Aristobulus as his sources, closely followed by Diodorus.^[14]

Notes

^ **i:** By the time of his death, he had conquered the entire Achaemenid Persian Empire, adding it to Macedon's European territories; according to some modern writers, this was most of the world then known to the ancient Greeks (the 'Ecumene').^{[223][224]} An approximate view of the world known to Alexander can be seen in Hecataeus of Miletus's map; see Hecataeus world map.

^ **ii:** For instance, Hannibal supposedly ranked Alexander as the greatest general;^[225] Julius Caesar wept on seeing a statue of Alexander, since he had achieved so little by the same age;^[226] Pompey consciously posed as the 'new Alexander';^[227] the young Napoleon Bonaparte also encouraged comparisons with Alexander.^[228]

^ **iii:** The name *Ἀλέξανδρος* derives from the Greek verb "ἀλέξω" (alexō), "to ward off, to avert, to defend"^[229] and the noun "ἄνδρός" (andros), genitive of "ἄνῆρ" (anēr), "man"^[230] and means "protector of men."^[231]

^ **iv:** "In the early 5th century the royal house of Macedon, the Temenidae, was recognised as Greek by the

Presidents of the Olympic Games. Their verdict was and is decisive. It is certain that the Kings considered themselves to be of Greek descent from Heracles son of Zeus."^[232]

^ **v**: "AEACIDS Descendants of Aeacus, son of Zeus and the nymph Aegina, eponymous (see the term) to the island of that name. His son was Peleus, father of Achilles, whose descendants (real or supposed) called themselves Aeacids: thus Pyrrhus and Alexander the Great."^[233]

^ **vi**: There have been, since the time, many suspicions that Pausanias was actually hired to murder Philip. Suspicion has fallen upon Alexander, Olympias and even the newly crowned Persian Emperor, Darius III. All three of these people had motive to have Philip murdered.^[234]

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External links

- Alexander the Great (http://www.dmoz.org/Society/History/By_Time_Period/Ancient/Greece/People/Alexander_the_Great//) at the Open Directory Project
 - Alexander the Great: An annotated list of primary sources (http://www.livius.org/aj-al/alexander/alexander_z1b.html) from Livius.org
 - The Elusive Tomb of Alexander the Great: (<http://www.archaeology.org/online/features/alexander/tomb.html>)
 - Two Great Historians On Alexander the Great (conversations between historians James Romm and Paul Cartledge), on Forbes: Part 1 (<http://blogs.forbes.com/booked/2010/12/12/two-great-historians-on-alexander-the-great-part-one/>), Part 2 (<http://blogs.forbes.com/booked/2010/12/17/two-great-historians-on-alexander-the-great-part-two/>), Part 3 (<http://blogs.forbes.com/booked/2010/12/20/two-historians-talk-alexander-the-great-part-3/>), Part 4 (<http://blogs.forbes.com/booked/2011/01/03/two-great-historians-talk-alexander-the-great-part-4/>), Part 5 (<http://blogs.forbes.com/booked/2011/01/10/how-great-a-general-was-alexander/?boxes=financechannelforbes>), Part 6 (<http://blogs.forbes.com/booked/2011/01/28/two-great-historians-talk-alexander-the-great-part-6/>)
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Amazons

Amazons

The **Amazons** (Greek: Ἀμαζόνες, *Amazónes*, singular Ἀμαζών, *Amazōn*) are a nation of all-female warriors in Greek mythology and Classical antiquity. Herodotus placed them in a region bordering Scythia in Sarmatia (modern territory of Ukraine). Other historiographers place them in Asia Minor,^[1] or Libya.^[2]

Notable queens of the Amazons are Penthesilea, who participated in the Trojan War, and her sister Hippolyta, whose magical girdle, given to her by her father Ares, was the object of one of the labours of Hercules. Amazonian raiders were often depicted in battle with Greek warriors in amazonomachies in classical art.

The Amazons have become associated with various historical peoples throughout the Roman Empire period and Late Antiquity. In Roman historiography, there are various accounts of Amazon raids in Asia Minor. From the Early Modern period, their name has become a term for female warriors in general.

Etymology

The origin of the word is uncertain. It may be derived from an Iranian ethnonym **ha-mazan-*, "warriors", a word attested as a denominal verb (formed with the Indo-Iranian root *kar-* "make" also in *kar-ma*) in Hesychius of Alexandria's gloss ἁμαζακάραν· πολεμεῖν. Πέρσαι ("hamazakaran: 'to make war' (Persian)").^[3] Alternatively, a Greek derivation from **ἡ-mḡ-gw-jon-es* "manless, without husbands" (*a-* privative and a derivation of **man-* also found in Slavic *muzh*) has been proposed, an explanation deemed "unlikely" by Hjalmar Frisk.^[4] 19th century scholarship also connected the term to the ethnonym Amazigh.^[5] A further explanation proposes Iranian **ama-janah* "virility-killing" as source.^[6]

Among Classical Greeks, *amazon* was given a popular etymology as from *a-mazos*, "without breast", connected with an etiological tradition that Amazons had their left breast cut off or burnt out, so they would be able to use a bow more freely and throw spears without the physical limitation and obstruction;^[7] there is no indication of such a practice in works of art, in which the Amazons are always represented with both breasts, although the left is frequently covered (see photos in article).



Amazon preparing for a battle (Queen Antiope or Armed Venus), by Pierre-Eugène-Emile Hébert 1860 (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

Origins



Illustration depicting defeated Greeks being cruelly executed by Amazons.



Amazon wearing trousers and carrying a shield with an attached patterned cloth and a quiver. Ancient Greek Attic white-ground alabastron, ca. 470 BC, British Museum, London

Amazons were said to have lived in Pontus, which is part of modern day Turkey near the shore of the Euxine Sea (the Black Sea). There they formed an independent kingdom under the government of a queen named Hippolyta or Hippolyte ("loose, unbridled mare").^[8] The Amazons were supposed to have founded many towns, amongst them Smyrna, Ephesus, Sinope, and Paphos. According to the dramatist Aeschylus, in the distant past they had lived in Scythia (modern Crimea), at the *Palus Maeotis* ("Lake Maeotis", the Sea of Azov), but later moved to Themiscyra on the River Thermodon (the Terme river in northern Turkey). Herodotus called them *Androktones* ("killers of men"), and he stated that in the Scythian language they were called *Oiorpata*, which he asserted had this meaning.

The myth

In some versions of the myth, no men were permitted to have sexual encounters or reside in Amazon country; but once a year, in order to prevent their race from dying out, they visited the Gargareans, a neighbouring tribe. The male children who were the result of these visits were either killed, sent back to their fathers or exposed in the wilderness to fend for themselves; the girls were kept and brought up by their mothers, and trained in agricultural pursuits, hunting, and the art of war. In other versions when the Amazons went to war they would not kill all the men. Some they would take as slaves, and once or twice a year they would have sex with their slaves.^[9]

The intermarriage of Amazons and men from other tribes was also used to explain the origin of various peoples. For example, the story of the Amazons settling with the Scythians (Herodotus Histories 4.110.1-117.1).^[10]

In the *Iliad*, the Amazons were referred to as *Antianeirai* ("those who fight like men").

The Amazons appear in Greek art of the Archaic period and in connection with several Greek legends. They invaded Lycia, but were defeated by Bellerophon, who was sent against them by Iobates, the king of that country, in the hope

that he might meet his death at their hands.^{[11][12]} The tomb of Myrine is mentioned in the *Iliad*; later interpretation made of her an Amazon: according to Diodorus,^[13] Queen Myrine led her Amazons to victory against Libya and much of Gorgon.

They attacked the Phrygians, who were assisted by Priam, then a young man.^[14] Although in his later years, towards the end of the Trojan War, his old opponents took his side again against the Greeks under their queen Penthesilea "of Thracian birth", who was slain by Achilles.^{[15][16][17][18][19][20]}

One of the tasks imposed upon Heracles by Eurystheus was to obtain possession of the girdle of the Amazonian queen Hippolyta.^{[21][22][23][24]} He was accompanied by his friend Theseus, who carried off the princess Antiope, sister of Hippolyta, an incident which led to a retaliatory invasion of Attica,^{[25][26]} in which Antiope perished fighting by the side of Theseus. In some versions, however, Theseus marries Hippolyta and in others, he marries Antiope and she does not die; by this marriage with the Amazon Theseus had a son Hippolytus. The battle between the Athenians and Amazons is often commemorated in an entire genre of art, amazonomachy, in marble bas-reliefs such as from the Parthenon or the sculptures of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus.



Thalestris, Queen of the Amazons, visits Alexander (1696)

The Amazons are also said to have undertaken an expedition against the island of Leuke, at the mouth of the Danube, where the ashes of Achilles had been deposited by Thetis. The ghost of the dead hero appeared and so terrified the horses, that they threw and trampled upon the invaders, who were forced to retire. Pompey is said to have found them in the army of Mithridates.

They are heard of in the time of Alexander, when some of the king's biographers make mention of Amazon Queen Thalestris visiting him and becoming a mother by him (the story is known from the *Alexander Romance*). However, several other biographers of Alexander dispute the claim, including the highly regarded secondary source, Plutarch. In his writing he makes mention of a moment when Alexander's

secondary naval commander, Onesicritus, was reading the Amazon passage of his Alexander history to King Lysimachus of Thrace who was on the original expedition: the king smiled at him and said "And where was I, then?"

The Roman writer Virgil's characterization of the Volscian warrior maiden Camilla in the *Aeneid* borrows heavily from the myth of the Amazons.

Jordanes' *Getica* (c. 560), purporting to give the earliest history of the Goths, relates that the Goths' ancestors, descendants of Magog, originally dwelt within Scythia, on the Sea of Azov between the Dnieper and Don Rivers. After a few centuries, following an incident where the Goths' women successfully fended off a raid by a neighboring tribe, while the menfolk were off campaigning against Pharaoh Vesosis, the women formed their own army under Marpesia and crossed the Don, invading Asia. Her sister Lampedo remained in Europe to guard the homeland. They procreated with men once a year. These Amazons conquered Armenia, Syria, and all of Asia Minor, even reaching Ionia and Aeolia, holding this vast territory for 100 years. Jordanes also mentions that they fought with Hercules, and in the Trojan War, and that a smaller contingent of them endured in the Caucasus Mountains until the time of Alexander. He mentions by name the Queens Menalippe, Hippolyta, and Penthesilea.

Lists

There are several (conflicting) lists of names of Amazons.

Quintus Smyrnaeus^[27] lists the attendant warriors of Penthesilea: "Clonie was there, Polemusa, Derinoe, Evandre, and Antandre, and Bremusa, Hippothoe, dark-eyed Harmothoe, Alcibie, Derimacheia, Antibrote, and Thermodosa glorying with the spear."

Diodorus Siculus^[28] enlists nine Amazons who challenged Heracles to single combat during his quest for Hippolyta's girdle and died against him one by one: Aella, Philippis, Prothoe, Eriboea, Celaeno, Eurybia, Phoebe, Deianeira, Asteria, Marpe, Tecmessa, Alcippe. After Alcippe's death, a group attack followed.

Another list of Amazons' names is found in Hyginus' *Fabulae*.^[29] Along with Hippolyta, Otrera, Antiope and Penthesilea, it attests the following names: Ocyale, Dioxippe, Iphinome, Xanthe, Hippothoe, Laomache, Glauce, Agave, Theseis, Clymene, Polydora.

Yet another different set of names is found in Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*:^[30] he mentions Euryale, Harpe, Lyce, Menippe and Thoe. Of these Lyce also appears in a fragment preserved in the *Latin Anthology* where she is said to have killed the hero Clonus of Moesia, son of Doryclus, with her javelin.^[31]

John Tzetzes in *Posthomerica*^[32] enumerates the Amazons that fell at Troy: Hippothoe, Antianeira, Toxophone, Toxoanassa, Gortyessa, Iodoce, Pharetre, Andro, Ioxeia, Oïstrophe, Androdaïxa, Aspidocharme, Enchesimargos, Cnemis, Thorece, Chalcaor, Eurylophe, Hecate, Anchimache, Andromache the queen. Concerning Antianeira and Andromache, see below; for almost all the other names on the list, this is a unique attestation.

Stephanus of Byzantium provides an alternate list of the Amazons that fell against Heracles, describing them as "the most prominent" of their people: Tralla, Isocrateia, Thiba, Palla, Coea (Koia), Coenia (Koinia).^[33] Eustathius gives the same list minus the last two names.^[34] Both Stephanus and Eustathius write of these Amazons in connection with the placename Thibais, which they report to have been derived from Thiba's name.

Other names of Amazons from various sources include:

- Aegea, queen of the Amazons who was thought by some to have been the eponym of the Aegean Sea.^[35]
- Ainia, presumably accompanied Penthesilea to the Trojan War, killed by Achilles; known only from an Attic terracotta relief fragment.^[36]
- Ainippe, an Amazon who confronted Telamon in the battle against Heracles' troops^[37]
- Alce, who was said to have killed the young Oebalus of Arcadia, son of Ida (otherwise unknown), with her spear during the Parthian War.^[31]
- Amastris, who was believed to be the eponym of the city previously known as Kromna,^[38] although the city was also thought to have been named after the historical Amastris^[39]
- Anaea, an Amazon whose tomb was shown at the island of Samos^[40]
- Andromache, an Amazon who fought Heracles and was defeated; only known from vase paintings.^{[37][41]} Not to be confused with Andromache, wife of Hector.
- Antianeira, succeeded Penthesilea as Queen of the Amazons. She was best known for ordering her male servants to be crippled "as the lame best perform the acts of love".^[42]
- Areto and Iphito, two little-known Amazons, whose names are only attested in inscriptions on artefacts.^[43]
- Clete, one of the twelve followers of Penthesilea. After Penthesilea's death she, in accord with the former's will, sailed off and eventually landed in Italy, founding the city of Clete.^[44]
- Cyme, who gave her name to the city of Cyme (Aeolis)^{[45][46]}
- Cynna (?), one of the two possible eponyms (the other one being "Cynnus, brother of Coeus") of Cynna, a small town not far from Heraclea.^[47]
- Ephesos, a Lydian Amazon, after whom the city of Ephesus was thought to have been named; she was also said to have been the first to honor Artemis and to have surnamed the goddess *Ephesia*.^[48] Her daughter Amazo was thought of as the eponym of the Amazons.^[49]

- Eurypyle, queen of the Amazons who was reported to have led an expedition against Ninus and Babylon around 1760 BC^{[50][51][52]}
- Gryne, an Amazon who was thought to be the eponym of the Gryneian grove in Asia Minor. She was loved by Apollo and consorted with him in said grove.^{[53][54]}
- Helene, daughter of Tityrus. She fought Achilles and died after he seriously wounded her.^[55]
- Hippo, an Amazon who took part in the introduction of religious rites in honor of the goddess Artemis. She was punished by the goddess for not having performed a ritual dance.^[56]
- Lampedo, queen of the Amazons, co-ruler with Marpesia^{[57][58]}
- Latoreia, who had a small village near Ephesus named after her.^[59]
- Lysippe, mother of Tanais by Berossos. Her son only venerated Ares and was fully devoted to war, neglecting love and marriage. Aphrodite cursed him with falling in love with his own mother. Preferring to die rather than give up his chastity, he threw himself into the river Amazonius, which was subsequently renamed Tanais.^[60]
- Marpesia, queen of the Amazons, co-ruler with Lampedo^{[57][58]}
- Melanippe, sister of Hippolyta. Heracles captured her and demanded Hippolyta's girdle in exchange for her freedom. Hippolyta complied and Heracles let her go. According to some,^[61] however, she was killed by Telamon.
- Molpadia, an Amazon who killed Antiope.^[62]
- Myrleia, possible eponym of a city in Bithynia, which was later known as Apamea.^[63]
- Myrto, in one source, mother of Myrtilus by Hermes^[64] (elsewhere his mother is called Theobule).^[65]
- Mytilene, Myrina's sister and one of the possible eponyms for the city of Mytilene^[46]
- Orithyia, daughter and successor of Marpesia, famous for her conquests^{[57][58]}
- Otrera, consort of Ares and mother of Hippolyta and Penthesilea.
- Pantariste, who killed Timiades in the battle between the Amazons and Heracles' troops.^[37]
- Pitane and Priene, two commanders in Myrina's army, after whom the cities of Pitane (Aeolis) and Priene were named.^[46]
- Sanape, who fled to Pontus and married a local king. She habitually drank a lot of wine and was said to have received her name from that circumstance, as "Sanape" was purported to mean "drunkard" in the local language.^[66]
- Sinope, successor of Lampedo and Marpesia.^[58]
- Sisyrbe, after whom a part of Ephesus was called Sisyrba, and its inhabitants the Sisyrbitae.^{[67][68]}
- Smyrna, who obtained possession of Ephesus and gave her name to a quarter in this city, as well as to the city of Smyrna^{[69][70][71]}
- Themiscyra, the eponym of the Amazon capital^{[72][73]}.

Hero cults

According to ancient sources, (Plutarch Theseus,^[74] Pausanias), Amazon tombs could be found frequently throughout what was once known as the ancient Greek world. Some are found in Megara, Athens, Chaeronea, Chalcis, Thessaly at Skotousa, in Cynoscephalae and statues of Amazons are all over Greece. At both Chalcis and Athens Plutarch tells us that there was an Amazoneum or shrine of Amazons that implied the presence of both tombs and cult. On the day before the Thesea at Athens there were annual sacrifices to the Amazons. In historical times Greek maidens of Ephesus performed an annual circular dance with weapons and shields that had been established by Hippolyta and her Amazons. They had initially set up wooden statues of Artemis, a bretas, (Pausanias, (fl.c.160): Description of Greece, Book I: Attica).^[75]



Two female gladiators with their names *Amazonia* and *Achillea*

In art

In works of art, battles between Amazons and Greeks are placed on the same level as and often associated with battles of Greeks and centaurs. The belief in their existence, however, having been once accepted and introduced into the national poetry and art, it became necessary to surround them as far as possible with the appearance of natural beings. Their occupation was hunting and war; their arms the bow, spear, axe, a half shield, nearly in the shape of a crescent, called *pelta*, and in early art a helmet, the model before the Greek mind having apparently been the goddess Athena. In later art they approach the model of Artemis, wearing a thin dress, girt high for speed; while on the later painted vases their dress is often peculiarly Persian –

that is, close-fitting trousers and a high cap called the *kidaris*. They were usually on horseback but sometimes on foot. They can also be identified in vase paintings by the fact that they are wearing one earring. The battle between Theseus and the Amazons (*Amazonomachy*) is a favourite subject on the friezes of temples (e.g. the reliefs from the frieze of the temple of Apollo at Bassae, now in the British Museum), vases and sarcophagus reliefs; at Athens it was represented on the shield of the statue of Athena Parthenos, on wall-paintings in the Theseum and in the *Stoa Poikile*. There were also three standard Amazon statue types.

In historiography

Herodotus reported that the Sarmatians were descendants of Amazons and Scythians, and that their wives observed their ancient maternal customs, "frequently hunting on horseback with their husbands; in war taking the field; and wearing the very same dress as the men". Moreover, said Herodotus, "No girl shall wed till she has killed a man in battle". In the story related by Herodotus, a group of Amazons was blown across the Maeotian Lake (the Sea of Azov) into Scythia near the cliff region (today's southeastern Crimea). After learning the Scythian language, they agreed to marry Scythian men, on the condition that they not be required to follow the customs of Scythian women. According to Herodotus, this band moved toward the northeast, settling beyond the Tanais (Don) river, and became the ancestors of the Sauromatians. According to Herodotus, the Sarmatians fought with the Scythians against Darius the Great in the 5th century B.C.

Hippocrates describes them as: "They have no right breasts...for while they are yet babies their mothers make red-hot a bronze instrument constructed for this very purpose and apply it to the right breast and cauterize it, so that its growth is arrested, and all its strength and bulk are diverted to the right shoulder and right arm."

Amazons came to play a role in Roman historiography. Caesar reminded the Senate of the conquest of large parts of Asia by Semiramis and the Amazons. Successful Amazon raids against Lycia and Cilicia contrasted with effective resistance by Lydian cavalry against the invaders (Strabo 5.504; Nicholas Damascenus). Gnaeus Pompeius Trogus pays particularly detailed attention to the Amazons. The story of the Amazons as deriving from a Cappadocian colony of two Scythian princes Ylinos and Scolopetos is due to him. Philostratus places the Amazons in the Taurus Mountains. Ammianus places them east of Tanais, as neighbouring the Alans. Procopius places them in the Caucasus. Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliotheca historica* chapter 49) derived the Amazons from Atlantis and located them in western Libya. He also relates the story of Hercules defeating the Amazons at Themiscyre. Although Strabo shows scepticism as to their historicity, the Amazons in general continue to be taken as historical throughout Late

Antiquity. Several Church Fathers speak of the Amazons as of a real people. Solinus embraces the account of Plinius. Under Aurelianus, captured Gothic women were identified as Amazons (Claudianus). The account of Justinus was influential, and was used as a source by Orosius who continued to be read during the European Middle Ages. Medieval authors thus continue the tradition of locating the Amazons in the North, Adam of Bremen placing them at the Baltic Sea and Paulus Diaconus in the heart of Germania.^[76]

Medieval and Renaissance literature

Amazons continued to be discussed by authors of the European Renaissance, and with the Age of Exploration, they were located in ever more remote areas. In 1542, Francisco de Orellana reached the Amazon River (*Amazonas* in Spanish), naming it after a tribe of warlike women he claimed having encountered and fought there.^[77] Afterwards the whole basin and region of the Amazon (*Amazonía* in Spanish) were named after the river. Amazons also figure in the accounts of both Christopher Columbus and Walter Raleigh.^[78] Famous medieval traveller John Mandeville mentions them in his book:

"Beside the land of Chaldea is the land of Amazonia, that is the land of Feminye. And in that real is all woman and no man; not as some may say, that men may not live there, but for because that the women will not suffer no men amongst them to be their sovereigns." ^[79]

Medieval and Renaissance authors credit the Amazons with the invention of the battle-axe. This is probably related to the Sagaris, an axe-like weapon associated with both Amazons and Scythian tribes by Greek authors (see also Thracian tomb of Aleksandrovo kurgan). Paulus Hector Mair expresses astonishment that such a "manly weapon" should have been invented by a "tribe of women", but he accepts the attribution out of respect for his authority, Johannes Aventinus.

Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* contains a country of warrior women, ruled by Queen Orontea; the epic describes an origin much like that in Greek myth, in that the women, abandoned by a band of warriors and unfaithful lovers, rallied together to form a nation from which men were severely reduced, to prevent them from regaining power. The Amazons and Queen Hippolyta are also referenced in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* in "The Knight's Tale".

Historical background

Classicist Peter Walcot wrote, "Wherever the Amazons are located by the Greeks, whether it is somewhere along the Black Sea in the distant north-east, or in Libya in the furthest south, it is always beyond the confines of the civilized world. The Amazons exist outside the range of normal human experience."^[80]

Nevertheless, there are various proposals for a historical nucleus of the Amazons of Greek historiography, the most obvious candidates being historical Scythia and Sarmatia in line with the account by Herodotus, but some authors prefer a comparison to cultures of Asia Minor or even Minoan Crete.

Archaeology

Scythians and Sarmatians

Speculation that the idea of Amazons contains a core of reality is based on archaeological findings from burials, pointing to the possibility that some Sarmatian women may have participated in battle. These findings have led scholars to suggest that the Amazonian legend in Greek mythology may have been "inspired by real warrior women".^[81]

Evidence of high-ranking warrior women comes from kurgans in southern Ukraine and Russia. David Anthony notes, "About 20% of Scythian-Sarmatian "warrior graves" on the lower Don and lower Volga contained women dressed for battle similar to how men dress, a phenomenon that probably inspired the Greek tales about the Amazons."^[82]

Up to 25% of military burials were of armed Sarmatian women usually including bows.^[83] Russian archaeologist Vera Kovalevskaya points out that when Scythian men were away fighting or hunting, nomadic women would have to be able to defend themselves, their animals and pasture-grounds competently. During the time that the Scythians advanced into Asia and achieved near-hegemony in the Near-East, there was a period of twenty-eight years when the men would have been away on campaigns for long periods. During this time the women would not only have had to defend themselves, but to reproduce and this could well be the origin of the idea that Amazons mated once a year with their neighbours, if Herodotus actually intended to base this on a factual base.^[83]

Before modern archaeology uncovered some of the Scythian burials of warrior-maidens entombed under kurgans in the region of Altai Mountains and Sarmatia,^[84] ^[85] giving concrete form at last to the Greek tales of mounted Amazons, the origin of the story of the Amazons has been the subject of speculation among classics scholars. In the 1911 *Encyclopædia Britannica* speculation ranged along the following lines:

"While some regard the Amazons as a purely mythical people, others assume an historical foundation for them. The deities worshipped by them were Ares (who is consistently assigned to them as a god of war, and as a god of Thracian and generally northern origin) and Artemis, not the usual Greek goddess of that name, but an Asiatic deity in some respects her equivalent. It is conjectured that the Amazons were originally the temple-servants and priestesses (*hierodulae*) of this goddess; and that the removal of the breast corresponded with the self-mutilation of the god Attis and the galli, Roman priests of Rhea Cybele. Another theory is that, as the knowledge of geography extended, travellers brought back reports of tribes ruled entirely by women, who carried out the duties which elsewhere were regarded as peculiar to man, in whom alone the rights of nobility and inheritance were vested, and who had the supreme control of affairs. Hence arose the belief in the Amazons as a nation of female warriors, organized and governed entirely by women. According to J. Viirtheim (*De Ajacis origine*, 1907), the Amazons were of Greek origin [...] It has been suggested that the fact of the conquest of the Amazons being assigned to the two famous heroes of Greek mythology, Heracles and Theseus [...] shows that they were mythical illustrations of the dangers which beset the Greeks on the coasts of Asia Minor; rather perhaps, it may be intended to represent the conflict between the Greek culture of the colonies on the Euxine and the barbarism of the native inhabitants."



Mounted Amazon in Scythian costume, on an Attic red-figure vase, ca 420 BCE

Minoan Crete

When Minoan archeology was still in its infancy, nevertheless, a theory raised in an essay regarding the Amazons contributed by Lewis Richard Farnell and John Myres to Robert Ranulph Marett's *Anthropology and the Classics* (1908),^[86] placed their possible origins in Minoan civilization, drawing attention to overlooked similarities between the two cultures. According to Myres, (pp. 153 ff), the tradition interpreted in the light of evidence furnished by supposed Amazon cults seems to have been very similar and may have even originated in Minoan culture.



Departure of the Amazons, by Claude Deruet, 1620.

Notes

- [1] "4,000-year-old legend about northern Turkey to become film - Hurriyet Daily News and Economic Review" (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=0627113515282-2010-06-28>). Hurriyetdailynews.com. . Retrieved 2010-09-07.
- [2] Schmitz, Leonhard (1867). "Amazones" (<http://www.ancientlibrary.com/smith-bio/0146.html>). In William Smith. *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*. 1. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. pp. 137–138. .
- [3] Lagercrantz, *Xenia Lidéniana* (1912), 270ff., cited after Hjalmar Frisk, *Greek Etymological Dictionary* (1960, 1970) (<http://www.indo-european.nl/cgi-bin/param-change-handle.cgi?url=response.cgi?root=leiden&morpho=0&basename=\data\ie\frisk&first=351&encoding=utf-eng>)
- [4] Jacobsohn, KZ 54, 278ff., cited after Hjalmar Frisk (1960, 1970).
- [5] Guy Cadogan Rothery, *The Amazons* (1910) , ch. 7 (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/wmn/ama/ama08.htm>): "There have been some authors who trace the word Amazon from this term."
- [6] Hinge 2005, pp. 94–98
- [7] "Amazon" (<http://oed.com/search?searchType=dictionary&q=Amazon>). *Oxford English Dictionary* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press. 2001. .
- [8] This area is known to have been occupied in the Late Bronze Age by a transhumant group known to the Hittites as the Kaška; though they were not directly known to Greeks, modern archaeologists have detected that they finally defeated their enemies, the Hittites, about 1200 BCE; they left no inscriptions.
- [9] Strabo xi. 503.
- [10] History of Herodotus, Book 4
- [11] Homer, *Iliad* vi. 186, &c.
- [12] Scholiast On Lycophron 17
- [13] Homer, *Iliad* Book ii.45-46; book iii.52-55
- [14] Homer, *Iliad* iii. 189
- [15] In the *Aethiopis*, a continuation of the *Iliad*. The epic, by Arctinus of Miletus, is lost: only references to it survive.
- [16] Quintus Smyrnaeus i. 699
- [17] Justin ii.4
- [18] Virgil, *Aeneid* i. 490
- [19] Pausanias, *Description of Greece* v. 11. § 2
- [20] Philostratus *Her.* xix. 19
- [21] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* ii. 5
- [22] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* iv. 16
- [23] Gaius Julius Hyginus, *Fabulae* 30
- [24] Quintus Smyrnaeus xi. 244

- [25] Pausanias, *Description of Greece* i. 2
- [26] Plutarch, *Theseus* 26-28
- [27] Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica* I
- [28] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* IV. 16
- [29] Gaius Julius Hyginus, *Fabulae* 163
- [30] Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* (<http://www.theoi.com/Text/ValeriusFlaccus1.html>), 6. 370-377
- [31] *Latin Anthology*, 392 (*Traiani Imperatoris e Bello Parthico versus decori*), ed. Riese
- [32] Tzetzes, *Posthomerica*, 176-183
- [33] Stephanus of Byzantium, s. v. *Thibaiis*
- [34] Eustathius on Dionysius Periegetes, 828
- [35] Sextus Pompeius Festus, s. v. *Aegeum Mare*
- [36] New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 42.11.33, ca. 600. *LIMC*, "Achilleus" no. 720*.
- [37] Perseus Digital Library - Description of the Tyrrhenian amphora ([http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/artifact?name=Boston 98.916&object=Vase](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/artifact?name=Boston%2098.916&object=Vase))
- [38] Demosthenes in Stephanus of Byzantium s. v. Amastris
- [39] Strabo, *Geography*, 12. 3. 11
- [40] Stephanus of Byzantium s. v. Anaia
- [41] Perseus Digital Library - Detail of the vase painting that portrays the fight between Andromache and Heracles (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/image?img=Perseus:image:1990.24.0349>)
- [42] Mimnermus, Fragment 21a
- [43] Blok, Josine H. The early Amazons: modern and ancient perspectives on a persistent myth. Brill, 1995; page 218 ([http://books.google.com/books?id=vHzLgcqHzQcC&pg=PA218&lpg=PA218&dq=Areto++Iphito&source=bl&ots=hU63Jf3lti&sig=kIIIneQACHVu-tcngn5u4iEWBiL4&hl=en&ei=wnniTI_NPI_Gswa-g4zzCw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=7&ved=0CCwQ6AEwBjgU#v=onepage&q=Areto "Iphito"&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=vHzLgcqHzQcC&pg=PA218&lpg=PA218&dq=Areto++Iphito&source=bl&ots=hU63Jf3lti&sig=kIIIneQACHVu-tcngn5u4iEWBiL4&hl=en&ei=wnniTI_NPI_Gswa-g4zzCw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=7&ved=0CCwQ6AEwBjgU#v=onepage&q=Areto%20Iphito&f=false)) (with a reference to *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, "Amazones" entry, vol. 1, p. 653)
- [44] Tzetzes on Lycophron, 995
- [45] Stephanus of Byzantium, s. v. Kyme
- [46] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 3. 55
- [47] Stephanus of Byzantium, s. v. *Kynna*. Stephanus does not write out the Amazon's name, simply stating that the town Cynna could have been named "after one of the Amazons".
- [48] *Etymologicum Magnum* 402. 8, under *Ephesos*
- [49] Stephanus of Byzantium, s. v. *Ephesos*
- [50] Arrian cited by Eustathius in *Fragmenta historicorum Graecorum*, vol. III, p. 595 (http://books.google.com/books?id=YsZAAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- [51] F. A. Ukert, *Die Amazonen*, Abhandlungen der philosophisch-philologischen Classe der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (1849).
- [52] Eurypyle (http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner_party/heritage_floor/eurpyle.php)
- [53] Servius on Aeneid, 4. 345
- [54] William Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, v. 2, page 315 (<http://ancientlibrary.com/smith-bio/1423.html>)
- [55] Ptolemy Hephaestion, *New History*, 4, summarized in Photius, [[*Bibliotheca* (Photius)|*Bibliotheca* (http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/photius_copyright/photius_05bibliotheca.htm)], 190], although the source does not explicitly state that she was an Amazon
- [56] Callimachus, Hymn 3 to Artemis, 239 & 267
- [57] Justin's Epitome of Trogus Pompeius' History of the World, Book 2, part IV (<http://www.freewebs.com/vitaphone1/history/justin.html>)
- [58] Paulus Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos*, I. 15 (<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/orosius/orosius1.shtml>)
- [59] Athenaeus, *Banquet of the Learned*, 1. 31D (p 139), with a reference to Alciphron of Maeander
- [60] Pseudo-Plutarch, *On Rivers*, 14
- [61] Scholia on Pindar, Nemean Ode 3. 64
- [62] Plutarch, *Theseus*, 27
- [63] Stephanus of Byzantium, s. v. *Myrleia*
- [64] Scholia on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 1. 752; compare also Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 8. 14. 8, where it is deemed likely that the Myrtoan Sea takes its name from a certain woman named Myrto
- [65] Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 224
- [66] Scholia on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 2. 946
- [67] Stephanus of Byzantium, s. v. *Σίροβα*
- [68] Strabo, *Geography*, 14. 1. 4
- [69] Stephanus of Byzantium, ss. vv. Smyrna, Ephesos
- [70] Strabo, *Geography*, 11. 5. 5; 12. 3. 22; 14. 1. 4

- [71] Pritchett, W. Kendrick (1998). *Studies in ancient Greek topography: Passes* (http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=wtjMuE_o-OkC&pg=PA276&dq=Smyrna+amazon+Strabo&hl=en&ei=osekTLSyOs2K4QbQlaDhDQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCKQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Smyrna+amazon+Strabo&f=false). University of California Press. p. 276. ISBN 978-0-520-09660-8. . Retrieved 30 September 2010.
- [72] Appian, *Mithridatic Wars*, 78 (http://www.livius.org/ap-ark/appian/appian_mithridatic_16.html#§78)
- [73] Eustathius] on Homer, *Iliad* 2. 814
- [74] "The Internet Classics Archive | Theseus by Plutarch" (<http://www.google.com/search?q=cache:BiDerPMT15YJ:classics.mit.edu/Plutarch/theseus.html+Amazon+statues+in+Scotussa&hl=en&gl=us&ct=clnk&cd=4>). Google.com. 2010-09-02. . Retrieved 2010-09-07.
- [75] Ancient History Sourcebook: Pausanias: Description of Greece, Book I: Attica (<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/pausanias-bk1.html>)
- [76] F. A. Ukert, *Die Amazonen*, Abhandlungen der philosophisch-philologischen Classe der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (1849), 63..
- [77] It has been suggested that what Orellana actually engaged was an especially warlike tribe of Native Americans whose warrior men had long hair and thus appeared to him as women. See Theobaldo Miranda Santos, *Lendas e mitos do Brasil* ("Brazil's legends and myths"), Companhia Editora Nacional, 1979.
- [78] Ukert (1849), p. 35.
- [79] *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, Dover publications, Mineola, New York, 2006, cap. XVII, p. 103-104
- [80] P. Walcot, "Greek Attitudes towards Women: The Mythological Evidence" *Greece & Rome* 2nd Series 31.1 (April 1984, pp. 37-47) p 42.
- [81] Lyn Webster Wilde, "Did the Amazons really exist?" *Diotima* (<http://www.stoa.org/diotima/essays/wilde.shtml>)
- [82] Anthony, David W. (2007). *The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World* (<http://books.google.com/books?id=rOG5VcYxhiEC>). Princeton University Press. ISBN 0-691-05887-3. .
- [83] Diotima (<http://www.stoa.org/diotima/essays/wilde.shtml>)
- [84] "Warrior Women of Eurasia" (<http://www.archaeology.org/9701/abstracts/sarmatians.html>), Archaeology Magazine (Abstract) Volume 50 Number 1, January/February 1997 Retrieved 7/10/08.
- [85] In a recent excavation of Sarmatian sites by Dr. Jeannine Davis-Kimball, a tomb was found wherein female warriors were buried.
- [86] L.R. Farnell and J.L. Myres, "Herodotus and anthropology" in Robert R. Marett *Anthropology and the Classics* 1908, pp. 138ff.

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- W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (**German**)
- Theobaldo Miranda Santos, *Lendas e mitos do Brasil* (Companhia Editora Nacional, 1979) (**Portuguese**)
- W. Stricker, *Die Amazonen in Sage und Geschichte* (1868) (**German**)

External links

- Wounded Amazon (<http://www.amazons-info.com/>)
- Herodotus on the Amazons (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Hdt.+4.110.1>)
 - Herodotus via Gutenberg (<http://www.gutenberg.org/browse/authors/h#a828>)
 - Perseus (<http://www.perseus.org/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0004:id=amazon>)
- Straight Dope: Amazons (<http://www.straightdope.com/mailbag/mamazon.html>)
- Religious cults associated with the Amazons (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/wmn/rca/index.htm>) (Florence Mary Bennett, 1912)

Antiope

In Greek mythology, **Antiope** (Ἀντιόπη /ænˈtiˌɒpiː/) was an Amazon, daughter of Ares and sister to Melanippe and Hippolyte and possibly Orithyia, queens of the Amazons.^[1] She was the wife of Theseus, and the only Amazon known to have married. There are various accounts of the manner in which Theseus became possessed of her, and of her subsequent fortunes.

In one version, during Heracles' ninth labor, which was to obtain the Girdle of Hippolyte, when he captured the Amazons' capital of Themiscyra, his companion Theseus, king of Athens, abducted Antiope and brought her to his home^{[2][3]} (or she was captured by Heracles and then given by him to Theseus^[4]). According to Pausanias,^[5] Antiope fell in love with Theseus and betrayed the Amazons of her own free will. They were eventually married and she gave birth to a son, Hippolytus, who was named after Antiope's sister. Soon after, the Amazons attacked Athens in an attempt to rescue Antiope and to take back Hippolyte's girdle; however, in a battle near the hill of Ares they were defeated. During this conflict, known as the Attic War, Antiope was accidentally shot dead by an Amazon named Molpadia, who, in her turn, was then killed by Theseus.^[6] Tombs of both Antiope and Molpadia were shown in Athens.^[5]

According to some sources, the cause for the Amazons' attack on Athens was the fact that Theseus had abandoned Antiope and planned to marry Phaedra. Antiope was furious about this and decided to attack them on their wedding day. She promised to kill every person in attendance; however, she was slain instead by Theseus himself, fulfilling an oracle's prophecy to that effect.^[7] Ovid mentions that Theseus killed Antiope despite the fact that she was pregnant.^[8]

An alternate version of the myth relates all of the facts concerning Antiope (abduction by Theseus, their marriage, birth of Hippolytus, her being left behind in favour of Phaedra) not of her, but of Hippolyte.^{[9][10][11]} In various accounts of this version, the subsequent attack on Athens either does not occur at all or is led by Orithyia.^[12]

In Giovanni Boccaccio's *Famous Women*,^[13] a chapter is dedicated to Antiope and Orithyia.

References

- [1] Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos*, I. 15 (<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/orosius/orosius1.shtml>)
- [2] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, Epitome of Book IV, 1. 16; this source also cites a rare version which makes Melanippe, not Antiope, the one captured by Theseus
- [3] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 4. 16
- [4] Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 30
- [5] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 1. 2. 1
- [6] Plutarch, *Theseus*, 26–27
- [7] Hyginus, *Fabulae* 241
- [8] Ovid, *Heroides*, 4. 117–120
- [9] Simonides in Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, Epitome 1. 16
- [10] Euripides, *Hippolytus*
- [11] Athenaeus, *Banquet of the Learned*, 13. 557 (where she is called "Hippe")
- [12] Justin's Epitome of Trogus Pompeius' History of the World, Book 2, part IV (<http://www.freewebs.com/vitaphone1/history/justin.html>)
- [13] Giovanni Boccaccio's *Famous Women* translated by Virginia Brown (2001), p. 41–42; Cambridge and London, Harvard University Press; ISBN 0-674-01130-9;

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- Orosius. *Historiae adversus paganos*, I.15.7–9.

Otrera

In Greek mythology, **Otrera** (Greek: Οτρηρη *Otrērē*) was a Queen of the Amazons; the daughter of Eurys (the east wind), consort of Ares and mother of Hippolyta, Antiope, Melanippe and Penthesilea.^{[1][2]}

Otrera is sometimes considered the mythological founder of the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus,^[3] which was closely connected with Amazons.^[4] She is also sometimes considered the founder of the Amazon nation, though many myths place the first Amazons much earlier.

Notes

- [1] *Bibliotheca*, Epitome of Book IV, 5. 1
- [2] Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 30; 112
- [3] Hyginus, *Fabulae* 223, 225
- [4] Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 7. 2. 6

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- Grimal, Pierre, *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (http://books.google.com/books?id=iOx6de8LUNAC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false), Wiley-Blackwell, 1996, ISBN 978-0-631-20102-1. "Hippolyta" (http://books.google.com/books?id=iOx6de8LUNAC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=Hippolyta&f=false)
- Hyginus, *Fabulae* 225 (<http://www.theoi.com/Text/HyginusFabulae5.html#225>)
- Smith, William; *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, London (1873). "Otre'ra" (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0104:alphabetic+letter=O:entry+group=8:entry=ottrera-bio-1>), "Hippo'lyte" (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0104:alphabetic+letter=O:entry+group=8:entry=hippolyte-bio-1>)

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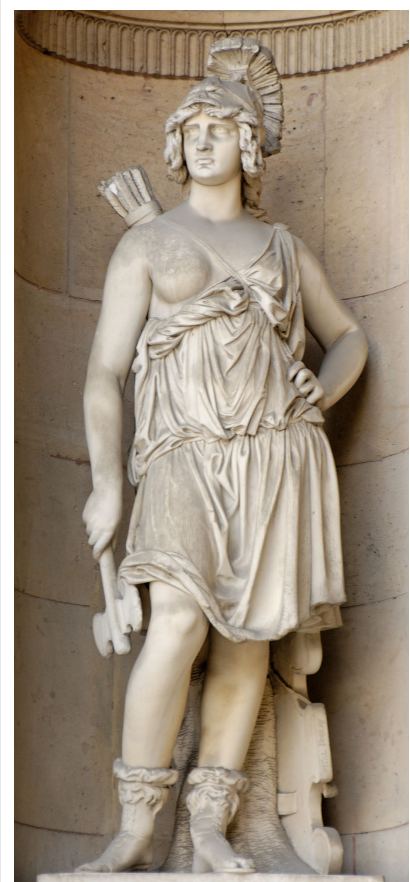
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- Florence Mary Bennett, *Religious Cults Associated with the Amazons*: (1912) (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/wmn/rca/rca04.htm>): Chapter III: Ephesian Artemis (text)
- Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica*: (<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/658>) (uncertain date, possibly 4th century AD) (text)

Penthesilea

Penthesilea (Greek: Πενθεσίλεια) or *Penthesileia* was an Amazonian queen in Greek mythology, the daughter of Ares and Otrera^[1] and the sister of Hippolyta, Antiope and Melanippe. Quintus Smyrnaeus^[2] explains more fully than pseudo-Apollodorus how Penthesilea came to be at Troy: Penthesilea had killed Hippolyta with a spear when they were hunting deer; this accident caused Penthesilea so much grief that she wished only to die, but, as a warrior and an Amazon, she had to do so honorably and in battle. She therefore was easily convinced to join in the Trojan War, fighting on the side of Troy's defenders.

Penthesilea in Quintus Smyrnaeus' Posthomerica

Penthesilea arrives in Troy at the start of Posthomerica the night before the fighting is due to recommence for the first time after Hector's death and funeral. She came to Troy for two reasons: firstly, to prove to others that her people, the Amazons, are great warriors and can share the hardships of war and, secondly, to appease the Gods after she accidentally killed her sister, Hippolyta, while hunting. She arrived with twelve companions and promised the Trojans that she would kill Achilles. On her first, and only, day of fighting, Penthesilea kills many men and clashes with Telamonian Ajax, although there is no clear victor, before she comes face to face with Achilles, who had been summoned by Telamonian Ajax. Prior to Achilles' entrance, Penthesilea had tried to fight Telamonian Ajax but he had merely laughed off her attempts, thinking her unfit to face him. Achilles eventually kills her, needing only one blow to her breastplate to knock her over and leave her begging for her life. He is unmoved by her pleas, however, and kills her. He mocks her corpse until he removes her helmet. At this point, Achilles commits necrophilia on her dead corpse. "Priestesses" by Norma Lorre Goodrich^[3]



Penthesilea (1862), by Gabriel-Vital Dubray (1813-1892). East façade of the Cour Carrée in the Louvre palace, Paris

Penthesilea in the Epic Cycle

Proclus, who summarized the lost epic, the *Aethiopis* of Arctinos of Miletus, of which only five lines survive in a quotation,^[4] gave the events of Penthesilea's life. The story of Penthesilea segues so smoothly from the *Iliad* in the Epic Cycle that one manuscript tradition of the *Iliad* ends

"Such were the funeral games of Hector. And now there came an Amazon, the great-hearted daughter of man-slaying Ares."

According to Diodorus Siculus

"Now they say that Penthesileia was the last of the Amazons to win distinction for bravery and that for the future the race diminished more and more and then lost all its strength; consequently in later times, whenever any writers recount their prowess, men consider the ancient stories about the Amazons to be fictitious tales." (Diodorus Siculus, ii. 46).

Alongside Penthesilea were twelve other Amazons, including Antibrote, Ainia, and Clete. The rest were Alcibie, Antandre, Bremusa, Derimacheia, Derinoe, Harmothoe, Hippothoe, Polemusa, and Thermodosa.^[5]

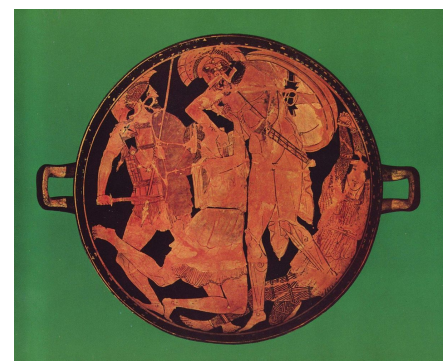
Death of Penthesilea

In the Pseudo-Apollodorus *Epitome of the Bibliothekē*^[6] she is said to have been killed by Achilles, "who fell in love with the Amazon after her death and slew Thersites for jeering at him". The common interpretation of this has been that Achilles was romantically enamored of Penthesilea^[7] (a view that appears to be supported by Pausanias, who noted that the throne of Zeus at Olympia bore Panaenus' painted image of the dying Penthesilea being supported by Achilles).^[8] Twelfth-century Byzantine scholar Eustathius of Thessalonica postulated a more brutal and literalist reading of the term *loved*, however, maintaining that Achilles actually committed an act of necrophilia on her corpse as a final insult to her.^[9]

The Greek Thersites mockingly jeered at Achilles's treatment of Penthesilea's body, whereupon Achilles killed him. "When the roughneck was at last killed by Achilles, for mocking the hero's lament over the death of the Amazon queen Penthesilea, a sacred feud was fought for Thersites' sake".^[10] Thersites' cousin Diomedes, enraged at Achilles' action, harnessed Penthesilea's corpse behind his chariot, dragged it and cast it into the Scamander, whence, however, it was retrieved and given decent burial, whether by Achilles or by the Trojans is not known from our fragmentary sources.^[11]



Penthesilea by Arturo Michelena



Achilles kills Penthesilea in the tondo of an Attic red-figure kylix, 470–460 BCE, found at Vulci

Robert Graves on Penthesilea

In Robert Graves' homonymous poem^[12], Penthesilea is "despoiled of her arms by Prince Achilles". Yet, Achilles slays Thersites for his disrespect towards Penthesilea.

A different tradition, attested in a lost poem of Stesichorus^[13] makes Penthesilea the slayer of Hector, seen as a son of Apollo.

Theme of Penthesilea

The subject of Penthesilea was treated so regularly by a sixth-century BC Attic vase-painter, whose work bridged the "Severe style" and Classicism, that Adolf Furtwängler dubbed the anonymous master "The 'Penthesilea Painter'". A considerable corpus for this innovative and prolific painter, who must have had a workshop of his own, was rapidly assembled^[14] in part by J.D. Beazley.

Eleanor of Aquitaine compared to Penthesilea

The Byzantine historian Nicetas Choniates compared Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, who took part in the Second Crusade, with Penthesilea.

Heinrich von Kleist's *Penthesilea*

The treatment of Penthesilea that has received most critical attention since the early twentieth century, however, is the drama *Penthesilea* by Heinrich von Kleist, who cast its "precipitously violent tempo"^[15] in the form of twenty-four consecutive scenes, without formal breaks into acts. The Swiss composer Othmar Schoeck wrote a 90' one-act opera, *Penthesilea* (Dresden, 1927) based on Kleist's drama.

Popular culture

The asteroid 271 Penthesilea, discovered in 1887, was named in her honor.^[16]

Penthiselea (a variant spelling of Penthesilea) is the name of a character in the BBC radio series *ElvenQuest*, a comic fantasy which aired in 2009. Penthiselea is a warrior princess, and a member of a band of adventurers sworn to put an end to the reign of the evil Lord Darkness. The character of Penthiselea is played by English actress Sophie Winkleman.^[17]

Notes

[1] Otrera is commonly invoked as the founder of the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus.

[2] Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica*.18ff.

[3] Quintus, and Alan James. "Book I." *The Trojan Epic: Posthomerica*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2004. 1-20. Print.

[4] Quintus Smyrnaeus on-line text. (<http://www.theoi.com/Text/QuintusSmyrnaeus1.html>)

[5] Julie Ruffell, "Brave women warriors of Greek myth: an Amazon roster" (<http://www.whoosh.org/issue12/ruffel3.html>) gives a long alphabetized list of Amazon names, but with no citations.

[6] Pseudo-Apollodorus *Epitome of the Bibliotheca* 5.1 (Sir James George Frazer's translation).

[7] Sextus Propertius, in Book III.11, poem XI, of his *Elegies*

[8] ""And, at the extremity of the painting, is Penthesilea breathing her last, and Achilles supporting her" (Pausanias, 10.31.1 and 5.11.2, noted by Graves 1960) This was the action that aroused Thersites' scorn.

[9] Eustathius on Homer, 1696. An act of necrophilia is not otherwise attested in any Greek epic, and this alleged act passed without notice by any commentator in Antiquity. Pseudo-Apollodorus *Epitome* v.1-2 does not mention this reading, and its editor Sir James George Frazer did not mention Eustathius' reading in his notes. For the death of Penthesilea, the medieval Rawlinson Excidium Troie was noted by Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* section 164, London: Penguin, (1955) 1960; Baltimore: Penguin. ISBN 0-14-001026-2.

[10] Abraham Feldman, "The Apotheosis of Thersites" *The Classical Journal* 42.4 (January 1947, pp. 219-220) p 220.

[11] Graves 1960:section 164.

[12] <http://www.translatum.gr/forum/index.php?topic=69738.0>

- [13] Quoted by John Tzetzes, *On Lycophron*, 266, noted by Graves 1960, section 163q, note 21.
- [14] Mary Hamilton Swindler, "The Penthesilea Master" *American Journal of Archaeology* **19.4** (October 1915), pp. 398-417. In the series *Bilder Griechischen Vasen* volume 10, edited by Hans Diepolder (1936) is devoted to the Penthesilea-Maler.
- [15] John C. Blankenagel, *The Dramas of Heinrich von Kleist: A Biographical and Critical Study* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press) 1931, p 145.
- [16] Schmadel, Lutz D.; International Astronomical Union (2003). *Dictionary of minor planet names* (<http://books.google.com/books?id=KWrB1jPCa8AC&pg=PA39>). Berlin; New York: Springer-Verlag. p. 39. ISBN 978-3-540-00238-3. . Retrieved 9 September 2011.
- [17] "The audio recording of ElvenQuest, published by BBC Audio in August 2009, ISBN 139781408439241 "

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- Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus Book 2 (<http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/justin/english/trans2.html>)
- The audio recording of ElvenQuest, published by BBC Audio in August 2009, ISBN 139781408439241

Thalestris

According to the mythological Greek *Alexander Romance*, Queen **Thalestris** (Ancient Greek: Θάληστρις) of the Amazons brought 300 women to Alexander the Great, hoping to breed a race of children as strong and intelligent as he. According to the legend, she stayed with the Macedonian king for 13 days and nights in the hope that the great warrior would father a daughter by her.^[1]

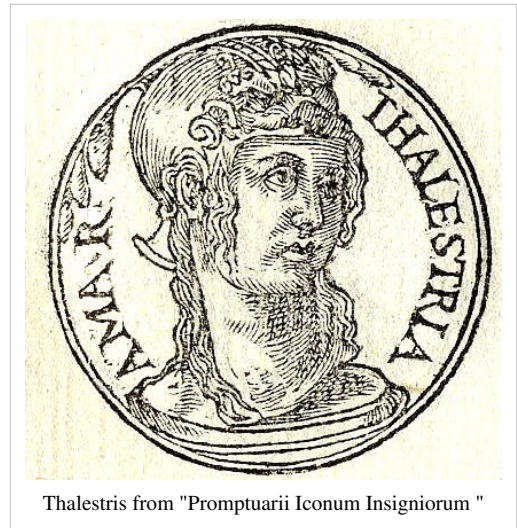
However, several of Alexander's biographers dispute the claim, including the highly regarded secondary source, Plutarch. He mentions 14 authors, some of whom believed the story (so Onesicritus, Cleitarchus), while others took it to be only fiction (so Aristobulus of Cassandreia, Chares of Mytilene, Ptolemy I of Egypt, Duris of Samos).^[2]

In his writing Plutarch also makes mention of when Alexander's secondary naval commander, Onesicritus, was reading the Amazon passage of his Alexander history to King Lysimachus of Thrace who was on the original expedition, the king smiled at him and said "And where was I, then?"^[3]

The story is rejected by modern scholars as legendary. Perhaps behind the legend lies the offering by a Scythian king of his daughter as a wife for Alexander, as the latter himself wrote in a letter to Antipater.^[4]

Modern references

Thalestris is also the name of a character in Mary Renault's historical novel *The King Must Die*, set in the time of the mythological Theseus, who lived - if he existed at all - a thousand years or more before Alexander. The Thalestris character is depicted by Renault as a skilled Amazonian bull-dancer and valiant warrior - which is presumably why the writer gave her the name of an Amazon queen. There is also a brief reference to the courtship between Alexander and Thalestris in Beaumarchais' *Le Mariage De Figaro*.



Thalestris from "Promptuarii Iconum Insigniorum "

Notes

- [1] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* 17.77.1-3; Quintus Curtius Rufus, *Historiae Alexandri Magni* 6.5.24-32; Justin 12.3.5-7
 - [2] Plutarch, *Alexander* 46.1-2; compare Strabo, *Geographica* 11.5.4 p. 505
 - [3] Plutarch, *Alexander* 46.4
 - [4] Plutarch, *Alexander* 46.3
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The Twelve Labours of Heracles

Labours of Hercules

The **twelve labours of Hercules** or **dodekathlon** (Greek: δωδέκαθλον, *dodekathlon*) are a series of episodes concerning a penance carried out by Heracles, the greatest of the Greek heroes, whose name was later romanised as Hercules. They were later connected by a continuous narrative. The establishment of a fixed cycle of twelve labours was attributed by the Greeks to an epic poem, now lost, written by Peisander, dated about 600 BC.^[1]



Roman relief (3rd century CE) depicting a sequence of the Labours of Hercules, representing from left to right the Nemean Lion, the Lernaean Hydra, the Erymanthian Boar, the Ceryneian Hind, the Stymphalian birds, the Girdle of Hippolyte, the Augean stables, the Cretan Bull and the Mares of Diomedes

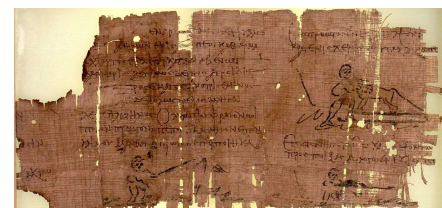
Context

Driven mad by Hera, Hercules slew his own six sons. After recovering his sanity, Hercules deeply regretted his actions; he was purified by King Thespius, then traveled to Delphi to inquire how he could atone for his actions. There the oracle Pythoness advised him to reside at Tyrins and serve King Eurystheus for twelve years, performing whatever labour might beset him; in return, he would be rewarded with immortality. Hercules despaired at this, loathing to serve a man whom he knew to be far inferior to himself, yet afraid to oppose his father Zeus. Eventually he placed himself at Eurystheus's disposal.

Eurystheus ordered Hercules to perform ten labours. Hercules accomplished these tasks, but Eurystheus refused to recognize two: the cleansing of the Augeas, because Hercules was going to accept pay for the labour; and the killing of the Lernaean Hydra, as Hercules' nephew and charioteer Iolaus had helped him. Eurystheus set two more tasks (fetching the Golden Apples of Hesperides and capturing Cerberus), which Hercules performed successfully, bringing the total number of tasks to twelve.

The labours

As they survive, the labours of Hercules are not told in any single place, but must be reassembled from many sources. Ruck and Staples^[2] assert that there is no one way to interpret the labours, but that six were located in the Peloponnese, culminating with the rededication of Olympia. Six others took the hero farther afield. In each case, the pattern was the same: Hercules was sent to kill or subdue, or to fetch back for Hera's representative Eurystheus a magical animal or plant. "The sites selected were all previously strongholds of Hera or the 'Goddess' and were Entrances to the Netherworld".^[2]



The Heracles Papyrus, a fragment of a 3rd-century Greek manuscript of a poem about the Labours of Heracles (Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 2331)

A famous depiction of the labours in Greek sculpture is found on the metopes of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, which date to the 450s BC.

In his labours, Hercules was sometimes accompanied by a male companion (an *eromenos*), according to Licymnius and others, such as Iolaus, his nephew. Although he was only supposed to perform ten labours, this assistance led to his suffering two more. Eurystheus didn't count the Hydra, because Iolaus helped him, or the Augean stables, as he received payment for his work, or because the rivers did the work. Several of the labours involved the offspring (by various accounts) of Typhon and his mate Echidna, all overcome by Hercules.

A traditional order of the labours found in the *Bibliotheca*^[3] is:

1. Slay the Nemean Lion.
2. Slay the nine-headed Lernaean Hydra.
3. Capture the Golden Hind of Artemis.
4. Capture the Erymanthian Boar.
5. Clean the Augean stables in a single day.
6. Slay the Stymphalian Birds.
7. Capture the Cretan Bull.
8. Steal the Mares of Diomedes.
9. Obtain the girdle of Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons.
10. Obtain the cattle of the monster Geryon.
11. Steal the apples of the Hesperides (He had the help of Atlas to pick them after Hercules had slain Ladon).
12. Capture and bring back Cerberus.

First Labour: Nemean lion

The first of Hercules' twelve labours, set by his cousin King Eurystheus, was to slay the Nemean lion.



Heracles and the Nemean lion
(oinochoe, 520-500 BC, from Vulci)

According to one version of the myth, the Nemean lion took women as hostages to its lair in a cave near Nemea, luring warriors from nearby towns to save the damsel in distress. After entering the cave, the warrior would see the woman (usually feigning injury) and rush to her side. Once he was close, the woman would turn into a lion and kill the warrior, devouring his remains and giving the bones to Hades.

Hercules wandered the area until he came to the town of Cleonae. There he met a boy who said that if Hercules slew the Nemean lion and returned alive within 30 days, the town would sacrifice a lion to Zeus, but if he did not return within 30 days or he died, the boy would sacrifice himself to Zeus. Another version claims that he met Molorchos, a shepherd who had lost his son to the lion, saying that if he came back within 30 days, a ram would be sacrificed to Zeus. If he did not return within 30 days, it would be sacrificed to the dead Heracles as a mourning offering.

While searching for the lion, Hercules fletched some arrows to use against it, not knowing that its golden fur was impenetrable; when he found and shot the lion and firing at it with his bow, he discovered the fur's protective property when the arrow bounced harmlessly off the creature's thigh. After some time, Hercules made the lion return to his cave. The cave had two entrances, one of which Hercules blocked; he then entered the other. In those dark and close quarters, Hercules stunned the beast with his club and, using his immense strength, strangled it to death. During the fight the lion bit off one of his fingers. Others say that he shot arrows at it, eventually shooting it in the unarmored mouth. After slaying the lion, he tried to skin it with a knife from his belt, but failed. He then tried sharpening the knife with a stone and even tried with the stone itself. Finally, Athena,

noticing the hero's plight, told Heracles to use one of the lion's own claws to skin the pelt. Others say that Hercules' armor was, in fact, the hide of the lion of Cithaeron.

When he returned on the thirtieth day carrying the carcass of the lion on his shoulders, King Eurystheus was amazed and terrified. Eurystheus forbade him ever again to enter the city; in future he was to display the fruits of his labours outside the city gates. In future, Eurystheus told Hercules his tasks through a herald, not personally. Eurystheus even had a large bronze jar made for him that he could hide in from Heracles if need be. Eurystheus then warned him that the tasks set for him would become increasingly difficult. He then sent Hercules off to complete his next quest, which was to destroy the Lernaean hydra.

Second Labour: Lernaen hydra

After slaying the Nemean lion, Eurystheus sent Hercules to slay the Hydra, which Hera had raised just to slay Hercules. Upon reaching the swamp near Lake Lerna, where the Hydra dwelt, Hercules covered his mouth and nose with a cloth to protect himself from the poisonous fumes. He fired flaming arrows into the Hydra's lair, the spring of Amymone, a deep cave that it only came out of to terrorize neighboring villages.^[4] He then confronted the Hydra, wielding a harvesting sickle (according to some early vase-paintings), a sword or his famed club. Ruck and Staples (1994: 170) have pointed out that the chthonic creature's reaction was botanical: upon cutting off each of its heads he found that two grew back, an expression of the hopelessness of such a struggle for any but the hero. The weakness of the Hydra was that only one of its heads was immortal.

The details of the struggle are explicit in the *Bibliotheca* (2.5.2): realizing that he could not defeat the Hydra in this way, Hercules called on his nephew Iolaus for help. His nephew then came upon the idea (possibly inspired by Athena) of using a firebrand to scorch the neck stumps after each decapitation. Hercules cut off each head and Iolaus cauterized the open stumps. Seeing that Hercules was winning the struggle, Hera sent a large crab to distract him. He crushed it under his mighty foot. The Hydra's one immortal head was cut off with a golden sword given to him by Athena. Hercules placed it under a great rock on the sacred way between Lerna and Elaius (Kerenyi 1959:144), and dipped his arrows in the Hydra's poisonous blood, and so his second task was complete. The alternative version of this myth is that after cutting off one head he then dipped his sword in it and used its venom to burn each head so it couldn't grow back. Hera, upset that Hercules slew the beast she raised to kill him, placed it in the dark blue vault of the sky as the Constellation Hydra. She then turned the crab into the Constellation Cancer.

Hercules later used an arrow dipped in the Hydra's poisonous blood to kill the centaur Nessus; and Nessus's tainted blood was applied to the Tunic of Nessus, by which the centaur had his posthumous revenge. Both Strabo and Pausanias report that the stench of the river Anigrus in Elis, making all the fish of the river inedible, was reputed to be due to the Hydra's poison, washed from the arrows Heracles used on the centaur.^[5]

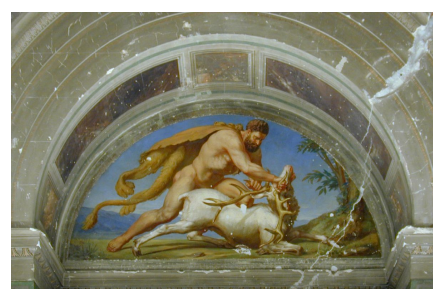


"Hercules and the hydra" by
Antonio Pollaiuolo

Third Labour: Ceryneian Hind

Eurystheus and Hera were greatly angered to find that Hercules had managed to escape from the claws of the Nemean Lion and the fangs of the Lernaean Hydra, and so decided to spend more time thinking up a third task that would spell doom for the hero. The third task did not involve killing a beast, as it had already been established that Hercules could overcome even the most fearsome opponents, so Eurystheus decided to make him capture the Ceryneian Hind, as it was so fast it could outrun an arrow.

After beginning the search, Hercules awoke from sleeping and he could see the hind from the glint on its antlers. Hercules then chased the hind on foot for a full year through Greece, Thrace, Istria and the land of the Hyperboreans. In some versions, he captured the hind while it slept, rendering it lame with a trap net. In other versions, he encountered Artemis in her temple and she told him to leave the hind and tell Eurystheus all that had happened and his third labor would be considered to be completed. Yet another version claims that Heracles trapped the Hind with an arrow between the forelegs of the creature.



Hercules and the Ceryneian Hind, 19th-century painting by Adolf Schmidt in its architectural setting



Heracles and the hind, with Athena and Artemis looking on (Attic amphora, 540–530 BCE)

Eurystheus had given Hercules this task hoping to incite Artemis' anger at Hercules for his desecration of her sacred animal. As he was returning with the hind, Hercules encountered Artemis and her brother Apollo. He begged the goddess for forgiveness, explaining that he had to catch it as part of his penance, but he promised to return it. Artemis forgave him, foiling Eurystheus' plan to have her punish him.

Upon bringing the hind to Eurystheus, he was told that it was to become part of the King's menagerie. Hercules knew that he had to return the hind as he had promised, so he agreed to hand it over on the condition that Eurystheus himself come out and take it from him. The King came out, but the moment Hercules let the hind go, it sprinted back to its mistress, and Heracles left saying that Eurystheus had not been quick enough. Eurystheus, upset that Heracles had managed to

overcome yet another creature, told him to bring the fearsome Erymanthian Boar back to him alive.

Fourth Labour: Erymanthian Boar

Hercules' fourth labour—by some counts, for there is no single definitive telling—was to capture the Boar. On the way there, Hercules visited Pholus ("caveman"), a kind and hospitable centaur and old friend. Hercules ate with him in his cavern—though the centaur devoured his meat raw—and asked for wine. Pholus had only one jar of wine, a gift from Dionysus to all the centaurs on Mt. Erymanthos. Hercules convinced him to open it, and the smell attracted the other centaurs. They did not understand that wine needs to be tempered with water, became drunk, and attacked. Hercules shot at them with his poisonous arrows, and the centaurs retreated all the way to Chiron's cave.

Pholus was curious why the arrows caused so much death, and picked one up but dropped it, and the arrow stabbed his foot, poisoning him. One version states that a stray arrow hit Chiron as well, but Chiron was immortal, although he still felt the pain. Chiron's pain was so great, he volunteered to give up his immortality, and take the place of Prometheus, who had been chained in to the top of a mountain to have his liver eaten daily by an eagle, although he was an immortal Titan. Prometheus' torturer, the eagle, continued its torture on Chiron, so Hercules shot it dead with an arrow. It is generally accepted that the tale was meant to show Hercules as being the recipient of Chiron's surrendered immortality. However, this tale contradicts the fact that Chiron later taught Achilles. The tale of the Centaurs sometimes appears in other parts of the twelve labours, as does the freeing of Prometheus.



Heracles presenting the boar to the cowering Eurystheus (black-figure amphora, ca. 510 BC)

Hercules had visited Chiron to gain advice on how to catch the boar, and Chiron had told him to drive it into thick snow, which sets this Labour in mid-winter. Having successfully caught the Boar, Hercules bound it and carried it back to Eurystheus, who was frightened of it and ducked down in his half-buried storage *pithos*, begging Heracles to get rid of the beast, a favorite subject for the vase-painters. Heracles obliged. Roger Lancelyn Green states in his *Tales of the Greek Heroes* that Hercules threw it in the sea. It then swam to Italy, where its tusks were preserved in the Temple of Apollo at Cumae. Three days later, Eurystheus, still trembling with fear, sent Hercules to clean the Augean stables.

Fifth Labour: Augean stables

The fifth Labour of Hercules was to clean the Augean stables (pronunciation: /ɔːˈdʒiːən/). This assignment was intended to be both humiliating (rather than impressive, as had the previous labours) and impossible, since the livestock were divinely healthy (immortal) and therefore produced an enormous quantity of dung. These stables had not been cleaned in over 30 years, and over 1,000 cattle lived there. However, Hercules succeeded by rerouting the rivers Alpheus and Peneus to wash out the filth.

Augeas was irate because he had promised Hercules one tenth of his cattle if the job was finished in one day. He refused to honour the agreement, and Hercules killed him after completing the tasks. Hercules gave his kingdom to Augeas' son Phyleus, who had been exiled for supporting Hercules against his father. According to the Odes of the poet Pindar, Hercules then founded the Olympic Games:



Heracles cleaning the Augean stables (mosaic from Roman Spain, 201–250 CE)

“the games which by the ancient tomb of Pelops the mighty Hercules founded, after that he slew Kleatos, Poseidon's godly son, and slew also Eurytos, that he might wrest from tyrannous Augeas against his will reward for service done.”^[6]

The success of this labour was ultimately discounted because the rushing waters had done the work of cleaning the stables and because Hercules was paid. Eurystheus, stating that Heracles still had seven Labours to perform, then sent Hercules to defeat the Stymphalian Birds.

Sixth Labour: Stymphalian Birds



Hercules and the Stymphalian birds
(mosaic from Roman Spain,
201–250 CE)

After cleaning the Augean Stables, Eurystheus sent Hercules to defeat the Stymphalian Birds, man-eating birds with beaks of bronze and sharp metallic feathers they could launch at their victims; they were sacred to Ares, the god of war. Furthermore, their dung was highly toxic. They had migrated to Lake Stymphalia in Arcadia, where they bred quickly and took over the countryside, destroying local crops, fruit trees and townspeople. Hercules could not go too far into the swamp, for it would not support his weight. Athena, noticing the hero's plight, gave Heracles a rattle which Hephaestus had made especially for the occasion. Hercules shook the rattle and frightened the birds into the air. Hercules then shot many of them with his arrows. The rest flew far away, never to return. The Argonauts would later encounter them.

Seventh Labour: Cretan Bull

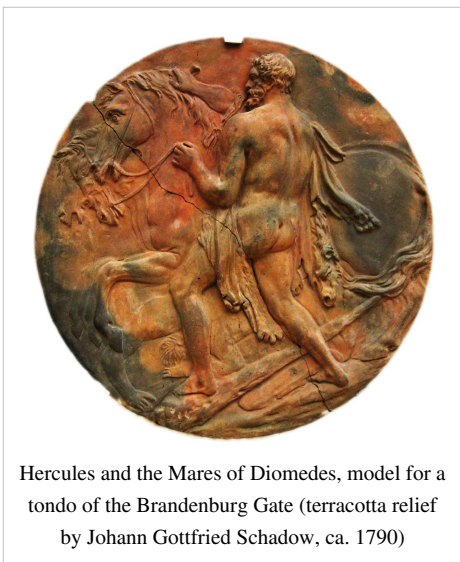
Whistling merrily at his success so far, Hercules was then sent to capture the bull by Eurystheus as his seventh task. He sailed to Crete, whereupon the King, Minos, gave Hercules permission to take the bull away and offered him assistance (which Hercules denied because of pride,^[7]), as it had been wreaking havoc on Crete by uprooting crops and leveling orchard walls. Hercules sneaked up behind the bull and then used his hands to throttle it (stopping before it was killed), and then shipped it back to Athens. Eurystheus, who hid in his *pithos* at first sight of the creature, wanted to sacrifice the bull to Hera, who hated Hercules. She refused the sacrifice because it reflected glory on Heracles. The bull was released and wandered into Marathon, becoming known as the Marathonian Bull.^[7] Theseus would later sacrifice the bull to Athena and/or Apollo. Eurystheus sent Hercules to bring back the man-eating Mares of Diomedes.



Hercules forces the bull to the
ground (engraving by B. Picart,
1731)

Eighth Labour: Mares of Diomedes

After capturing the Cretan bull, Hercules was to steal the Mares. In one version of the story, Hercules brought a number of youths to help him. They took the mares and were chased by Diomedes and his men.



Hercules and the Mares of Diomedes, model for a tondo of the Brandenburg Gate (terracotta relief by Johann Gottfried Schadow, ca. 1790)

Hercules was not aware that the horses, called Podagros (the fast), Lampon (the shining), Xanthos (the blond) and Deinos (the terrible), were kept tethered to a bronze manger because they were wild; their madness being attributed to an unnatural diet of human flesh.^[8] Some versions say that they expelled fire when they breathed. They were man-eating and uncontrollable, and Hercules left his favoured companion, Abderus, in charge of them while he fought Diomedes, and found out that the boy was eaten. In revenge, Hercules fed Diomedes to his own horses, then founded Abdera next to the boy's tomb.

In another version, Hercules stayed awake so that he didn't have his throat cut by Diomedes in the night, and cut the chains binding the horses. Having scared the horses onto the high ground of a peninsula, Heracles quickly dug a trench through the peninsula, filling it with water, thus making it an island. When Diomedes arrived, Hercules killed him with an axe (the one used to dig the trench), and fed the

body to the horses to calm them.

Both versions have eating make the horses calmer, and Hercules took the opportunity to bind their mouths shut, and easily took them back to King Eurystheus, who dedicated the horses to Hera. In some versions, they were allowed to roam freely around Argos, having become permanently calm, but in others, Eurystheus ordered the horses taken to Olympus to be sacrificed to Zeus, but Zeus refused them, and sent wolves, lions, and bears to kill them. Roger Lancelyn Green states in his *Tales of the Greek Heroes* that their descendants were used in the Trojan War. After the incident, Eurystheus sent Heracles to bring back Hippolyta's Girdle.

Ninth Labour: Belt of Hippolyta

Eurystheus' daughter Admete wanted the belt of Hippolyta, a gift to the queen of the Amazons from the war god Ares. To please his daughter, Eurystheus ordered Hercules to retrieve the belt as his ninth labour.

Taking a band of friends with him, Hercules set sail, stopping at the island of Paros, which was inhabited by some of Minos' sons. These killed two of Hercules' companions, an act which set Hercules on a rampage. He killed two of Minos' sons and threatened the other inhabitants until he was offered two men to replace his fallen companions. Hercules agreed and took two of Minos' grandsons, Alcaeus and Sthenelus. They continued their voyage and landed at the court of Lycus, whom Hercules defended in a battle against the king of the Bebryces, Mygdon. After killing King Mygdon, Hercules gave much of the land to his friend Lycus. Lycus called the land Heraclea. The crew then set off for Themiscyra where Hippolyte lived.

All would have gone well for Hercules had it not been for Hera. Hippolyte, impressed with Hercules and his exploits, agreed to give him the belt and would have done so had Hera not disguised herself and walked among the Amazons sowing seeds of distrust. She claimed the strangers were plotting to carry off the queen of the Amazons. Alarmed, the women set off on horseback to confront Hercules. When Hercules saw them, he thought Hippolyte had been plotting such treachery all along and had never meant to hand over the belt, so he killed her and took the belt, returning to Eurystheus. Eurystheus, shocked that Hercules survived his encounter with the Amazons, immediately sent him to capture the cattle of Geyron.



Hercules obtaining the belt of Hippolyta, by J.M. Félix Magdalena (b. 1941)

Tenth Labour: Cattle of Geryon

In the fullest account in the *Bibliothèque* of Pseudo-Apollodoros,^[9] Heracles was required to travel to the far-off western Mediterranean island of Erytheia, in order to obtain the Cattle of Geryon as his tenth labour. On the way there, he crossed the Libyan desert^[10] and became so frustrated at the heat that he shot an arrow at Helios, the Sun. Helios "in admiration of his courage" gave Hercules the golden cup he used to sail across the sea from west to east each night. Hercules used it to reach Erytheia, a favorite motif of the vase-painters. Such a magical conveyance undercuts any literal geography for Erytheia, the "red island" of the sunset.

When Hercules reached Erytheia, no sooner had he landed than he was confronted by the two-headed dog, Orthrus. With one huge blow from his olive-wood club, Heracles killed the watchdog. Eurytion the herdsman came to assist Orthrus, but Hercules dealt with him the same way.

On hearing the commotion, Geryon sprang into action, carrying three shields, three spears, and wearing three helmets. He pursued Hercules at the River Anthemus but fell victim to an arrow that had been dipped in the venomous blood of the Lernaean Hydra, shot so forcefully by Heracles that it pierced Geryon's forehead, "and Geryon bent his neck over to one side, like a poppy that spoils its delicate shapes, shedding its petals all at once".^[11]

Hercules then had to herd the cattle back to Eurystheus. In Roman versions of the narrative, on the Aventine hill in Italy, Cacus stole some of the cattle as Heracles slept, making the cattle walk backwards so that they left no trail, a repetition of the trick of the young Hermes. According to some versions, Heracles drove his remaining cattle past a cave, where Cacus had hidden the stolen animals, and they began calling out to each other. In others, Caca, Cacus' sister, told Heracles where he was. Heracles then killed Cacus, and according to the Romans, founded an altar where the Forum Boarium, the cattle market, was later held.

To annoy Hercules, Hera sent a gadfly to bite the cattle, irritate them and scatter them. The hero was within a year able to retrieve them. Hera then sent a flood which raised the level of a river so much, Heracles could not cross with the cattle. He piled stones into the river to make the water shallower. When he finally reached the court of Eurystheus, the cattle were sacrificed to Hera.



Heracles fighting Geryon (amphora, Painter of Munich, 540 BC)

Eleventh Labour: Apples of the Hesperides

After Hercules completed his first ten Labours, Eurystheus gave him two more claiming that neither the Hydra counted (because Iolaus helped Hercules) nor the Augean stables (either because he received payment for the job or because the rivers did the work). The first of these two additional Labours was to steal the apples from the garden of the Hesperides. Hercules first caught the Old Man of the Sea,^[12] the shape-shifting sea god, to learn where the Garden of the Hesperides was located.^[13]

In some variations, Hercules, either at the start or at the end of his task, meets Antaeus, who was invincible as long as he touched his mother, Gaia, the earth. Hercules killed Antaeus by holding him aloft and crushing him in a bearhug.^[14]



Hercules stealing the apples of the Hesperides (mosaic from Roman Spain, 3rd century CE)

Herodotus claims that Hercules stopped in Egypt, where King Busiris decided to make him the yearly sacrifice, but Hercules burst out of his chains.

Finally making his way to the Garden of the Hesperides, Hercules tricked Atlas into retrieving some of the golden apples for him, by offering to hold up the heavens for a little while (Atlas was able to take them as, in this version, he was the father or otherwise related to the Hesperides). This would have made this task – like the Hydra and Augean stables – void because he had received help. Upon his return, Atlas decided that he did not want to take the heavens back, and instead offered to deliver the apples himself, but Hercules tricked him again by agreeing to take his place on condition that Atlas relieve him temporarily so that Hercules could make his cloak more comfortable. Atlas agreed, but Hercules reneged and walked away, carrying the apples. According to an alternative version, Hercules slew Ladon, the dragon-like guardian of the apples, instead. Furious that Hercules had accomplished something that Eurystheus thought could not possibly be done, he sent Hercules off to his final task, the capture of Cerberus, the three-headed guardian hound of the gates of the Underworld.

Twelfth Labour: Cerberus

Capturing Cerberus alive, without using weapons, was the final labour assigned to Hercules by Eurystheus, in recompense for the killing of his own children by Megara after he was driven insane by Hera, and therefore was the most dangerous and difficult.

After having been given the task, Hercules went to Eleusis to be initiated in the Eleusinian Mysteries so that he could learn how to enter and exit the underworld alive, and in passing absolve himself for killing centaurs. He found the entrance to the underworld at Tanaerum, and Athena and Hermes helped him to traverse the entrance in each direction. He passed Charon with Hestia's assistance and his own heavy and fierce frowning.

Whilst in the underworld, Hercules met Theseus and Pirithous. The two companions had been imprisoned by Hades for attempting to kidnap Persephone. One tradition tells of snakes coiling around their legs then turning into stone; another that Hades feigned hospitality and prepared a feast inviting them to sit. They unknowingly sat in chairs of forgetfulness and were permanently ensnared. When Hercules had pulled Theseus first from his chair, some of his thigh stuck to it (this explains the supposedly lean thighs of Athenians), but the earth shook at the attempt to liberate Pirithous, whose desire to have the wife of a god for himself was so insulting he was doomed to stay behind.

Hercules found Hades and asked permission to bring Cerberus to the surface, which Hades agreed to if Hercules could overpower the beast without using weapons. Heracles was able to overpower Cerberus and proceeded to sling the beast over his back, dragging it out of the underworld through a cavern entrance in the Peloponnese and bringing it to Eurystheus. The king was so frightened of the beast that he jumped into a *pithos*, and asked Hercules to return it to the underworld in return for releasing him from his labors.

As a reward for finishing these twelve treacherous tasks, Hercules was given the gift of immortality after his death by his father Zeus. Hera forgave him and gave him her daughter Hebe for his bride.



References


- [1] According to Walter Burkert.
 - [2] Ruck, Carl; Danny Staples (1994). *The World of Classical Myth*. Durham, NC, USA: Carolina Academic Press. pp. 169.
 - [3] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliothèque* 2.5.1-2.5.12.
 - [4] Kerenyi, *The Heroes of the Greeks*(angelo) 1959:144.
 - [5] Strabo, viii.3.19, Pausanias, v.5.9; Grimal 1987:219.
 - [6] Pindar. *The Extant Odes of Pindar* (<http://www.gutenberg.net/etext/10717>), Project Gutenberg.
 - [7] *Bibliotheca* 2.5.7
 - [8] Horse madness (hippomania) and hippophobia, Yiannis G. Papakostas, Michael D. Daras, Ioannis A. Liappas and Manolis Markianos, *History of Psychiatry* 2005; 16; 467
 - [9] Pseudo-Apollodorus. *Bibliothèque*, 2.5.10.
 - [10] *Libya* was the generic name for North Africa to the Greeks.
 - [11] Stesichorus, fragment, translated by Denys Page.
 - [12] Kerenyi, *The Heroes of the Greeks*, 1959, p.172, identifies him in this context as Nereus; as a shape-shifter he is often identified as Proteus.
 - [13] In some versions of the tale, Hercules was directed to ask Prometheus. As payment, he freed Prometheus from his daily torture. This tale is more usually found in the position of the Erymanthian Boar, since it is associated with Chiron choosing to forgo immortality and taking Prometheus' place.
 - [14] Apollodorus ii. 5; Hyginus, Fab. 31
- Burkert, Walter (1985). *Greek Religion*. Cambridge, MA, USA: Harvard University Press.

External links

- Labors of Heracles (<http://www.livius.org/he-hg/heracles/heracles1.html>) at the Livius Picture Archive
 - The Labors of Hercules (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/Herakles/labors.html>) at the Perseus Digital Library
-

Nemean lion

Nemean lion



Hercules slaying the Nemean lion. Detail of a Roman mosaic from Llíria (Spain).

Mythology	Greek mythology
Grouping	Legendary creature
Country	Greece
Region	Nemea

The **Nemean lion** (Greek: Λέων τῆς Νεμέας (*Léōn tēs Neméas*); Latin: *Leo Nemeus*) was a vicious monster in Greek mythology that lived at Nemea. It was eventually killed by Heracles. It could not be killed with mortal weapons because its golden fur was impervious to attack. Its claws were sharper than mortal swords and could cut through any armor.

The lion is usually considered to have been the offspring of Typhon^[1] (or Orthrus)^[2] and Echidna; it is also said to have fallen from the moon as the offspring of Zeus and Selene, or alternatively born of the Chimera. The Nemean lion was sent to Nemea in the Peloponnesus to terrorize the city.

The First Labor of Heracles

The first of Heracles' twelve labours, set by King Eurystheus (his cousin) was to slay the Nemean lion.

According to one version of the myth, the Nemean lion took women as hostages to its lair in a cave near Nemea, luring warriors from nearby towns to save the damsel in distress. After entering the cave, the warrior would see the woman (usually feigning injury) and rush to her side. Once he was close, the woman would turn into a lion and kill the warrior, devouring his remains and giving the bones to Hades.

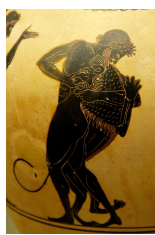
Heracles wandered the area until he came to the town of Cleonae. There he met a boy who said that if Heracles slew the Nemean lion and returned alive within 30 days, the town would sacrifice a lion to Zeus; but if he did not return within 30 days or he died, the boy would sacrifice himself to Zeus.^[1] Another version claims that he met Molorchos, a shepherd who had lost his son to the lion, saying that if he came back within 30 days, a ram would be sacrificed to Zeus. If he did not return within 30 days, it would be sacrificed to the dead Heracles as a mourning offering.

While searching for the lion, Heracles fetched some arrows to use against it, not knowing that its golden fur was impenetrable; when he found and shot the lion and firing at it with his bow, he discovered the fur's protective property when the arrow bounced harmlessly off the creature's thigh. After some time, Heracles made the lion return to his cave. The cave had two entrances, one of which Heracles blocked; he then entered the other. In those dark and close quarters, Heracles stunned the beast with his club and, using his immense strength, strangled it to death. During

the fight the lion bit off one of his fingers. Others say that he shot arrows at it, eventually shooting it in the unarmored mouth. After slaying the lion, he tried to skin it with a knife from his belt, but failed. He then tried sharpening the knife with a stone and even tried with the stone itself. Finally, Athena, noticing the hero's plight, told Heracles to use one of the lion's own claws to skin the pelt. Others say that Heracles' armor was, in fact, the hide of the lion of Cithaeron.

When he returned on the thirtieth day carrying the carcass of the lion on his shoulders, King Eurystheus was amazed and terrified. Eurystheus forbade him ever again to enter the city; in future he was to display the fruits of his labours outside the city gates. Eurystheus warned him that the tasks set for him would become increasingly difficult. He then sent Heracles off to complete his next quest, which was to destroy the Lernaean hydra. The Nemean lion's coat was impervious to the elements and all but the most powerful weapons.

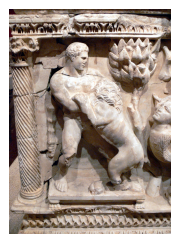
Heracles and the lion in art



Oinochoe,
520-500 BC,
from Vulci



Gandhara, India, 1st century



Roman-era relief,
2nd century



Renaissance plaque
by Galeazzo
Mondella



Painting by Francisco de
Zurbarán (1634)



Marble by J.M. Félix Magdalena
(b. 1941)

Notes

- [1] Apollodorus, *Library* 2.5.1 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Apollod.2.5.1&lang=original>)
 [2] Hesiod, *Theogony* 327 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hes.+Th.+327&fromdoc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0130>)

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- Smith, William; *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, London (1873). "Heracles or Hercules" (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0104:entry=heracles-bio-1&highlight=orthrus>)

Lernaeen Hydra

Lernaeen Hydra



The 16th-century German illustrator has been influenced by the Beast of Revelation in his depiction of the Hydra.

Mythology	Greek mythology
Grouping	Legendary creature
Sub-grouping	Serpent-like water spirit
Parents	Typhon & Echidna
Country	Greece

In Greek mythology, the **Lernaeen Hydra** (Ancient Greek: Λερναία Ὕδρα) was an ancient nameless serpent-like chthonic water beast, with reptilian traits, (as its name evinces) that possessed many heads — the poets mention more heads than the vase-painters could paint, and for each head cut off it grew two more — and poisonous breath so virulent even her tracks were deadly.^[1] The Hydra of Lerna was killed by Heracles as the second of his Twelve Labours. Its lair was the lake of Lerna in the Argolid, though archaeology has borne out the myth that the sacred site was older even than the Mycenaean city of Argos since Lerna was the site of the myth of the Danaids. Beneath the waters was an entrance to the Underworld, and the Hydra was its guardian.^[2]

The Hydra was the offspring of Typhon and Echidna (*Theogony*, 313), both of whom were noisome offspring of the earth goddess Gaia.^[3]

The Second Labour of Heracles

After slaying the Nemean lion, Eurystheus sent Heracles to slay the Hydra, which Hera had raised just to slay Heracles. Upon reaching the swamp near Lake Lerna, where the Hydra dwelt, Heracles covered his mouth and nose with a cloth to protect himself from the poisonous fumes. He fired flaming arrows into the Hydra's lair, the spring of Amymone, a deep cave that it only came out of to terrorize neighboring villages.^[4] He then confronted the Hydra, wielding a harvesting sickle (according to some early vase-paintings), a sword or his famed club. Ruck and Staples (1994: 170) have pointed out that the chthonic creature's reaction was botanical: upon cutting off each of its heads he found that two grew back, an expression of the hopelessness of such a struggle for any but the hero. The weakness of the Hydra was that it was invulnerable only if it retained at least one head.



Hercules and the Hydra, (c. 1475) by Antonio Pollaiuolo (Galleria degli Uffizi).

The details of the struggle are explicit in the *Bibliotheca* (2.5.2): realizing that he could not defeat the Hydra in this way, Heracles called on his nephew Iolaus for help. His nephew then came upon the idea (possibly inspired by Athena) of using a firebrand to scorch the neck stumps after each decapitation. Heracles cut off each head and Iolaus cauterized the open stumps. Seeing that Heracles was winning the struggle, Hera sent a large crab to distract him. He crushed it under his mighty foot. The Hydra's one immortal head was cut off with a golden sword given to him by Athena. Heracles placed it under a great rock on the sacred way between Lerna and Elaius (Kerenyi 1959:144), and dipped his arrows in the Hydra's poisonous blood, and so his second task was complete. The alternative version of this myth is that after cutting off one head he then dipped his sword in it and used its venom to burn each head so it couldn't grow back. Hera, upset that Heracles slew the beast she raised to kill him, placed it in the dark blue vault of the sky as the Constellation Hydra. She then turned the crab into the Constellation Cancer.

Heracles later used an arrow dipped in the Hydra's poisonous blood to kill the centaur Nessus; and Nessus's tainted blood was applied to the Tunic of Nessus, by which the centaur had his posthumous revenge. Both Strabo and Pausanias report that the stench of the river Anigrus in Elis, making all the fish of the river inedible, was reputed to be due to the Hydra's poison, washed from the arrows Heracles used on the centaur.^[5]

When Eurystheus, the agent of ancient Hera who was assigning The Twelve Labors to Heracles, found out that it was Heracles' nephew Iolaus who had handed him the firebrand, he declared that the labor had not been completed alone and as a result did not count towards the ten labours set for him. The mythic element is an equivocating attempt to resolve the submerged conflict between an ancient ten Labours and a more recent twelve.

Hercules and the hydra in art



Caeretan black-figure hydria
(ca. 525 BC)



Mosaic from Roman Spain
(201–250 AD)



Silver sculpture
(1530s)



Engraving (1545) by Hans
Sebald Beham



Gustave Moreau (1876)



John Singer Sargent (1921)

Constellation

Mythographers relate that the Lernaean Hydra and the crab were put into the sky after Heracles slew them. In an alternative version, Hera's crab was at the site to bite his feet and bother him, hoping to cause his death. Hera set it in the Zodiac to follow the Lion (Eratosthenes, *Catasterismi*). When the sun is in the sign of Cancer, the crab, the constellation Hydra has its head nearby.

Popular culture

- *Hydra* (film), a 2009 low-budget monster movie
- *Jason and the Argonauts* (film), a 1963 film featuring a battle between Jason and a Hydra.

Notes

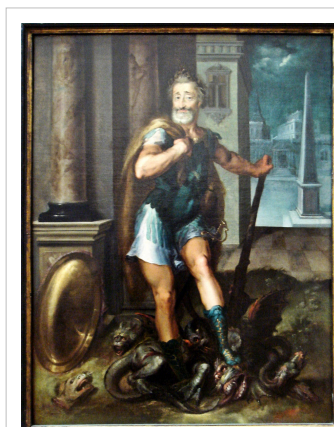
- [1] "This monster was so poisonous that she killed men with her breath, and if anyone passed by when she was sleeping, he breathed her tracks and died in the greatest torment." (Hyginus, 30).
- [2] Kerenyi (1959), 143.
- [3] For other chthonic monsters said in various sources to be ancient offspring of Hera, the Nemean Lion, the Stymphalian birds, the Chimaera, and Cerberus.
- [4] Kerenyi, *The Heroes of the Greeks*(angelo) 1959:144.
- [5] Strabo, viii.3.19, Pausanias, v.5.9; Grimal 1987:219.

Sources

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- Graves, Robert (1955). *The Greek Myths*.
- Kerenyi, Carl (1959). *The Heroes of the Greeks*.
- Burkert, Walter (1985). *Greek Religion*. Harvard University Press.
- Ruck, Carl and Staples, Danny (1994). *The World of Classical Myth*.
- Grimal, Pierre (1986). *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*. E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc.

External links

- Statue of the Hydra battling Hercules at the Louvre (http://cartelen.louvre.fr/cartelen/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=2926)



Henry IV as Hercules vanquishing the Lernaean Hydra (i.e. the Catholic League), workshop of Toussaint Dubreuil, ca.1600

Ceryneian Hind

Ceryneian Hind

AKA: Cerynitis



Heracles breaking off the golden antler of the Ceryneian Hind, while Athena (left) and Artemis look on (black-figure amphora, ca. 540–30 BC)

Mythology	Greek mythology
Grouping	Legendary creature
Country	Greece
Region	Keryneia, Greece

In Greek mythology, the **Ceryneian Hind** (Greek: ἡ Κερυνίτις ἔλαφος), also called **Cerynitis**, was an enormous hind (deer), who lived in Keryneia, Greece. It was sacred to Artemis, the chaste goddess of the hunt, animals and unmarried women. It had golden antlers like a stag and hooves of bronze or brass, and it was said that it could outrun an arrow in flight. The capture of the hind was one of the labors of Heracles (Hercules).

The Third Labor of Heracles

Eurystheus and Hera were greatly angered to find that Heracles had managed to escape from the claws of the Nemean Lion and the fangs of the Lernaean Hydra, and so decided to spend more time thinking up a third task that would spell doom for the hero. The third task did not involve killing a beast, as it had already been established that Heracles could overcome even the most fearsome opponents, so Eurystheus decided to make him capture the Ceryneian Hind, as it was so fast it could outrun an arrow.

After beginning the search, Heracles awoke from sleeping and he could see the hind from the glint on its antlers. Heracles then chased the hind on foot for a full year through Greece, Thrace, Istria and the land of the Hyperboreans. In some versions, he captured the hind while it slept, rendering it lame with a trap net. In other versions, he encountered Artemis in her temple and she told him to leave the hind and tell Eurystheus all that had happened and his third labor would be considered to be completed. Yet another version claims that Heracles trapped the Hind with an arrow between the forelegs of the creature.

Eurystheus had given Heracles this task hoping to incite Artemis' anger at Heracles for his desecration of her sacred animal. As he was returning with the hind, Heracles encountered Artemis and her brother Apollo. He begged the goddess for forgiveness, explaining that he had to catch it as part of his penance, but he promised to return it. Artemis forgave him, foiling Eurystheus' plan to have her punish him.



Heracles and Apollo struggling over the Hind, as depicted on a Corinthian helmet (early 5th century BC)

Upon bringing the hind to Eurystheus, he was told that it was to become part of the King's menagerie. Heracles knew that he had to return the hind as he had promised, so he agreed to hand it over on the condition that Eurystheus himself come out and take it from him. The King came out, but the moment Heracles let the hind go, it sprinted back to its mistress, and Heracles left saying that Eurystheus had not been quick enough. Eurystheus, upset that Heracles had managed to overcome yet another creature, told him to bring the fearsome Erymanthian Boar back to him alive.

Origin of the myth

A doe bearing antlers was unknown in Greece, but the story of the hind is suggestive of reindeer, which, unlike other deer, can be harnessed and whose females bear antlers. The myth relates to the northern Hyperborea, which may have been the archaic origin of the myth itself, as Robert Graves thought.

Constellation

When the sun is in the sign of Scorpio, the constellation Hercules rises. The Greeks referred to the constellation of Hercules as the Stag (*hind* is another word for doe), the identification of the constellation with Hercules was made by the Romans.

The constellation Hercules is near the constellation Sagitta, the arrow, the owner of which varies amongst the various versions of each part of Greek mythology. Artemis (to whom the Ceryneian Hind was said to have been sacred, causing her to draw an arrow at Hercules, just like the constellation Sagittarius appears to be doing), is a key player in the myth discussing the origin of Scorpio and death of Orion, and so has an association with this area of sky. The direction of the arrow also makes it appear that the constellation Hercules (the stag) is trying to outrun it.

In art



Roman bronze, 1st century BC



Roman-era bronze, 1st–2nd century AD



Mosaic from Roman Spain, 3rd century AD



Statuette by J.M. Félix Magdalena (b. 1941)

Erymanthian Boar

Erymanthian Boar



Heracles, Eurystheus and the Erymanthian Boar. Side A from an Ancient Greek black-figured amphora, painted by Antimenes, ca. 525 BC, from Etruria. Louvre Museum, Paris.

Mythology	Greek mythology
Grouping	Legendary creature
Country	Greece
Habitat	Mount Erymanthos

In Greek mythology, the **Erymanthian Boar** (Greek: ὁ Ἐρυμάνθιος κάπρος; Latin: aper Erymanthius) is remembered in connection with The Twelve Labours, in which Heracles, the (reconciled) enemy of Hera, visited in turn "all the other sites of the Goddess throughout the world, to conquer every conceivable 'monster' of nature and rededicate the primordial world to its new master, his Olympian father," Zeus.^[1]

In the primitive highlands of Arcadia, where old practices lingered, the Erymanthian Boar was a giant fear-inspiring creature of the wilds that lived on Mount Erymanthos, a mountain that was apparently once sacred to the Mistress of the Animals, for in classical times it remained the haunt of Artemis (Homer, *Odyssey*, VI.105). A boar was a dangerous animal: "When the goddess turned a wrathful countenance upon a country, as in the story of Meleager, she would send a raging boar, which laid waste the farmers' fields."^[2] In some accounts, Apollo sent the boar to kill Adonis, a favorite of Aphrodite, as revenge for the goddess blinding Apollo's son Erymanthus when he saw her bathing. Robert Graves^[3] suggested that Aphrodite had been substituted for Artemis in this retelling of the mytheme of the eponymous Erymanthus. The most commonly accepted version, however, states that Ares turned himself into a boar and killed Adonis out of jealousy.



Heracles and the Erymanthian Boar, by Louis Tuaillon, 1904 (Berlin Tierpark)

The Fourth Labour of Heracles

Heracles' fourth labour—by some counts, for there is no single definitive telling—was to capture the Boar. On the way there, Hercules visited Pholus ("caveman"), a kind and hospitable centaur and old friend. Hercules ate with him in his cavern—though the centaur devoured his meat raw—and asked for wine. Pholus had only one jar of wine, a gift from Dionysus to all the centaurs on Mt. Erymanthos. Heracles convinced him to open it, and the smell attracted the other centaurs. They did not understand that wine needs to be tempered with water, became drunk, and attacked. Heracles shot at them with his poisonous arrows, and the centaurs retreated all the way to Chiron's cave.

Pholus was curious why the arrows caused so much death, and picked one up but dropped it, and the arrow stabbed his foot, poisoning him. One version states that a stray arrow hit Chiron as well, but Chiron was immortal, although he still felt the pain. Chiron's pain was so great, he volunteered to give up his immortality, and take the place of Prometheus, who had been chained in to the top of a mountain to have his liver eaten daily by an eagle, although he was an immortal Titan. Prometheus' torturer, the eagle, continued its torture on Chiron, so Heracles shot it dead with an arrow. It is generally accepted that the tale was meant to show Heracles as being the recipient of Chiron's surrendered immortality. However, this tale contradicts the fact that Chiron later taught Achilles. The tale of the Centaurs sometimes appears in other parts of the twelve labours, as does the freeing of Prometheus.

Heracles had visited Chiron to gain advice on how to catch the boar, and Chiron had told him to drive it into thick snow, which sets this Labour in mid-winter. Having successfully caught the Boar, Heracles bound it and carried it back to Eurystheus, who was frightened of it and ducked down in his half-buried storage *pithos*, begging Heracles to get rid of the beast, a favorite subject for the vase-painters. Heracles obliged. Roger Lancelyn Green states in his *Tales of the Greek Heroes* that Heracles threw it in the sea. It then swam to Italy, where its tusks were preserved in the Temple of Apollo at Cumae. Three days later, Eurystheus, still trembling with fear, sent Heracles to clean the Augean stables.

Aside from the boar that killed Adonis, the other most celebrated boar in Greek myth was the Calydonian boar, who was killed by Meleager.

References

[1] Ruck and Staples, p. 163.

[2] Kerenyi (1959), p. 149.

[3] Graves 1955,126.1.

- Graves, Robert, *The Greek Myths* 1955.
- Kerenyi, Karl, *The Heroes of the Greeks* 1959.
- Carl A. P. Ruck and Danny Staples, *The World of Classical Myth*, 1994.
- Ovid, *Heroides*
- Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* ii.5.4ff
- Diodorus Siculus iv.12
- Apollonius of Rhodes i.122ff
- Pausanias, *Greece*

External links

- Greek Mountain Flora (<http://www.greekmountainflora.info/Mt Erymanthos Jalbum/Mt Erymanthos Greece.html>)
- Theoi Project : **Erymanthian Boar**, Giant boar of Arcadia (<http://www.theoi.com/Ther/HusErymanthios.html>)

Augeas

In Greek mythology, **Augeas** (or **Augeias**, /ɔːˈdʒiːəs/, Ancient Greek: Αὔγειας), whose name means "bright", was king of Elis and father of Epicaste. Some say that Augeas was one of the Argonauts.^[1]

He is best known for his stables, which housed the single greatest number of cattle in the country and had never been cleaned — until the time of the great hero Heracles.

Augeas' lineage varies in the sources—he was said to be either the son of Helios and Nausidame,^[2] or of Eleios, king of Elis, and Nausidame,^[3] or of Poseidon,^[4] or of Phorbas and Hyrmene.^[5] His children were Epicaste, Phyleus, Agamede (who was the mother of Dictys by Poseidon),^[6] Agasthenes, and Eurytus.

The fifth Labour of Heracles

The fifth Labour of Heracles (Hercules in Latin) was to clean the Augean stables (pronunciation: /ɔːˈdʒiːən/). This assignment was intended to be both humiliating (rather than impressive, as had the previous labours) and impossible, since the livestock were divinely healthy (immortal) and therefore produced an enormous quantity of dung. These stables had not been cleaned in over 30 years, and over 1,000 cattle lived there. However, Heracles succeeded by rerouting the rivers Alpheus and Peneus to wash out the filth.

Augeas was irate because he had promised Heracles one tenth of his cattle if the job was finished in one day. He refused to honour the agreement, and Heracles killed him after completing the tasks. Heracles gave his kingdom to Augeas' son Phyleus, who had been exiled for supporting Heracles against his father.

According to the Odes of the poet Pindar, Heracles then founded the Olympic Games:

“the games which by the ancient tomb of Pelops the mighty Heracles founded, after that he slew Kleatos, Poseidon's godly son, and slew also Eurytos, that he might wrest from tyrannous Augeas against his will reward for service done.”^[7]

The success of this labour was ultimately discounted because the rushing waters had done the work of cleaning the stables and because Heracles was paid. Eurystheus, stating that Heracles still had seven Labours to do, then sent Heracles to defeat the Stymphalian Birds.



Heracles rerouting the rivers Alpheus and Peneus. Roman mosaic, 3rd century AD.

References

- [1] Hyginus. *Fabulae*, 14 (<http://www.theoi.com/Text/HyginusFabulae1.html>).
 - [2] Hyginus. *Fabulae*, 14 (<http://www.theoi.com/Text/HyginusFabulae1.html>).
 - [3] Pausanias. *Description of Greece*, 5.1.9 (<http://www.theoi.com/Titan/HeliosFamily.html>).
 - [4] *Bibliotheca* 2.88 (<http://www.theoi.com/Titan/HeliosFamily.html>).
 - [5] Apollodorus. *The Library*, 2.88 (<http://www.theoi.com/Titan/HeliosFamily.html>).
 - [6] Hyginus. *Fabulae*, 157 (<http://www.theoi.com/Text/HyginusFabulae4.html#157>).
 - [7] Pindar. *The Extant Odes of Pindar* (<http://www.gutenberg.net/etext/10717>), Project Gutenberg.
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Stymphalian birds

Stymphalian birds



Heracles and the Stymphalian birds. Detail of a Roman mosaic from Llíria (Spain).

Mythology	Greek mythology
Grouping	Legendary creature
Sub-grouping	Birds
Country	Greece
Region	Arcadia
Habitat	Lake Stymphalia

In Greek mythology, the **Stymphalian birds** (Greek: Στυμφαλίδες ὄρνιθες, *Stymphalídes órnithes*) were man-eating birds with beaks of bronze and sharp metallic feathers they could launch at their victims, and were sacred to Ares, the god of war. Furthermore, their dung was highly toxic. They had migrated to Lake Stymphalia in Arcadia to escape a pack of wolves the Arabs set loose to kill them, and bred quickly and took over the countryside, destroying local crops, fruit trees and townspeople.

The Sixth Labour of Heracles

After cleaning the Augean Stables, Eurystheus sent Heracles to defeat the Stymphalian Birds. Heracles could not go too far into the swamp, for it would not support his weight. Athena, noticing the hero's plight, gave Heracles a rattle which Hephaestus had made especially for the occasion. Heracles shook the rattle and frightened the birds into the air. Heracles then shot many of them with his arrows. The rest flew far away, never to return. The Argonauts would later encounter them. Heracles then brought some of the birds he had killed to Eurystheus. He then sent Heracles to capture the Cretan Bull and bring it to him.

Cretan Bull

Cretan Bull



Heracles capturing the Cretan Bull. Detail of a Roman mosaic from Llíria (Spain).

Mythology	Greek mythology
Grouping	Legendary creature
Country	Greece
Region	Crete
Similar creatures	Minotaur

In Greek mythology, the **Cretan Bull** was either the bull that carried away Europa or the bull Pasiphaë fell in love with, giving birth to the Minotaur.

Origin

When the sun has reached the constellation of Taurus, it has passed over an area that the ancients referred to as *the sea* - the region from Capricorn to the region containing Aries. It was referred to as the sea due to the high concentration of constellations identified as sea creatures within it, Aries being identified as a *golden flying ram* who flew over the sea. Crete is in a direct line from the natural harbor of Argo, a direction which due the shape of Argo's harbor, and surrounding coastline, requires that all ships initially take this course.

Apart from being a bull, Taurus contains a very bright and red star (Aldebaran), meaning that many took it to be evil. Some forms of Greek mythology associated the constellation with the tame white bull, in some versions Zeus in disguise, that seduced Europa and took her to Crete (Minos), whereas others associate it with the white bull that fathered the Minotaur. The Cretan Bull which fathered the Minotaur was originally calm and sent from Poseidon, but king Minos whom it was sent to fell out of favor with Poseidon, and so in some versions of the story, Poseidon made the bull angry.

The myth of Poseidon sending the bull (which seduced Minos' wife) may simply be an earlier version of the myth of Zeus seducing Europa, as in earlier Mycenaean times, Poseidon had significantly more importance than Zeus. The change of gods was due to the replacement of the Mycenaean culture and religion, with a later one favoring Zeus. Poseidon and Zeus, which have the same etymological origin (*Poseidon* deriving from *Posei-Deion* which means *Lord God*, and Zeus deriving from *Deus* which also means *God*), may be the result of the parallel evolution of the same original god in separate cultures, one (Poseidon - who is also associated with horses) becoming associated more with the sea (due to change in the main source of trade), and thus eventually becoming noticeably different.

The Seventh Labour of Heracles

Whistling merrily at his success so far, Heracles was then sent to capture the bull by Eurystheus as his seventh task. He sailed to Crete, whereupon the King, Minos, gave Heracles permission to take the bull away and offered him assistance, which Heracles denied because of pride,^[1] as it had been wreaking havoc on Crete by uprooting crops and leveling orchard walls. Heracles snuck up behind the bull and then used his hands to strangle it, and then shipped it back to Athens. Eurystheus, who hid in his *pithos* at first sight of the creature, wanted to sacrifice the bull to Hera, who hated Heracles. She refused the sacrifice because it reflected glory on Heracles. The bull was released and wandered into Marathon, becoming known as the Marathonian Bull.^[1] Theseus would later sacrifice the bull to Athena and/or Apollo. Eurystheus then sent Heracles to bring back the man-eating Mares of Diomedes.



This is an engraving of Hercules performing one of his labors as he forces a bull to the ground. The engraving was created by B. Picart in 1731.

Capture by Theseus

Androgeus, a son of Minos and Pasiphaë, competed in the games held by Aegeus, King of Athens. He won all the games, so angering Aegeus that he had the young man killed (some legends claim that he was sent to confront the Bull itself). Devastated, Minos went to war with Athens and won. As punishment, the Athenians had to send several youths every 9 years to be devoured by the Minotaur.

Aegeus' own son, Theseus, set to try to capture the Bull. On the way to Marathon, Theseus sought shelter from a storm in the shack owned by an old lady named Hecale. She swore to make a sacrifice to Zeus if Theseus was successful in capturing the bull. Theseus did capture the bull, but when he returned to Hecale's hut, she was dead. Theseus built a deme in her honor. He then dragged the Bull to Athens where he sacrificed it.

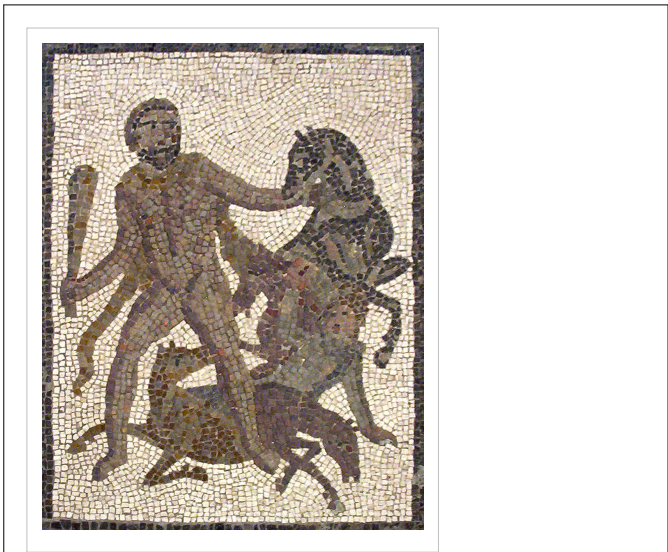
Theseus then went to Crete where he killed the Minotaur with the help of Minos' daughter Ariadne.

References

[1] *Bibliotheca* 2.5.7

Mares of Diomedes

Mares of Diomedes



Heracles capturing the Mares of Diomedes. Roman mosaic, 3rd century AD

Mythology	Greek mythology
Grouping	Legendary creature
Sub-grouping	Man-eating horses
Country	Greece
Region	Thrace

The **Mares of Diomedes**, also called the **Mares of Thrace**, were four man-eating horses in Greek mythology. Magnificent, wild, and uncontrollable, they belonged to the giant Diomedes (not to be confused with Diomedes, son of Tydeus), king of Thrace, a son of Ares and Cyrene who lived on the shores of the Black Sea. Bucephalus, Alexander the Great's horse was said to be descended from these mares.

The Eighth Labour of Heracles

After capturing the Cretan bull, Heracles was to steal the Mares. In one version of the story, Heracles brought a number of youths to help him. They took the mares and were chased by Diomedes and his men.

Heracles was not aware that the horses, called Podagros (the fast), Lampon (the shining), Xanthos (the blond) and Deimos (the terrible), were kept tethered to a bronze manger because they were wild; their madness being attributed to an unnatural diet of human flesh.^[1] Some versions say that they expelled fire when they breathed. They were man-eating and uncontrollable, and Heracles left his favoured companion, Abderus, in charge of them while he fought Diomedes, and found out that the boy was eaten. In revenge, Heracles fed Diomedes to his own horses, then founded Abdera next to the boy's tomb.

In another version, Heracles stayed awake so that he didn't have his throat cut by Diomedes in the night, and cut the chains binding the horses. Having scared the horses onto the high ground of a peninsula, Heracles quickly dug a trench through the peninsula, filling it with water, thus making it an island. When Diomedes arrived, Heracles killed him with an axe (the one used to dig the trench), and fed the body to the horses to calm them.

Both versions have eating make the horses calmer, and Heracles took the opportunity to bind their mouths shut, and easily took them back to King Eurystheus, who dedicated the horses to Hera. In some versions, they were allowed to roam freely around Argos, having become permanently calm, but in others, Eurystheus ordered the horses taken to Olympus to be sacrificed to Zeus, but Zeus refused them, and sent wolves, lions, and bears to kill them. Roger Lancelyn Green states in his *Tales of the Greek Heroes* that their descendants were used in the Trojan War. After the incident, Eurystheus sent Heracles to bring back Hippolyta's Girdle.

References

- [1] Horse madness (hippomania) and hippophobia, Yiannis G. Papakostas, Michael D. Daras, Ioannis A. Liappas and Manolis Markianos, *History of Psychiatry* 2005; 16; 467

External links

- 12 Labours (<http://www.ancientgreece.com/s/Heracles/12Labours>)

Hippolyta

In Greek mythology, **Hippolyte** or **Hippolyte** (Ἴππολύτη) is the Amazonian queen who possessed a magical girdle she was given by her father Ares, the god of war. The girdle was a waist belt that signified her authority as queen of the Amazons.

Hippolyta appears in the myth of Heracles. It was her girdle that Heracles was sent to retrieve for Admeta, the daughter of king Eurystheus, as his ninth labor. Most versions often begin by saying that Hippolyta was impressed with Heracles, and gave him the girdle without argument.

There are many endings to the story of Hippolyte: in fact, some mythologists have suggested that, because of the many different endings, she represents several different figures.

After Heracles obtained the girdle, Theseus, one of Heracles' companions (along with Sthenelus and Telamon), kidnapped Antiope, another sister of Hippolyta. The Amazons then attacked the party (because Heracles' enemy Hera had spread a vicious rumour that Heracles was there to attack them or to kidnap Hippolyta), but Heracles and Theseus escaped with the girdle and Antiope. According to one version, Heracles killed Hippolyta as they fled, which upset him as due to their earlier excellent rapport he would have wanted to marry Hippolyta. In order to rescue Antiope, the Amazons attacked Athens but failed, with Antiope dying in the onslaught in some versions.

In some versions, it is not Antiope whom Theseus abducts, but Hippolyta herself.

Some sources paint Theseus in a more favorable light, saying that Hippolyta was dead before he and Phaedra were wed.



Hippolyta from "Promptuarii Iconum Insigniorum"

Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

In William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Hippolyta is engaged to Theseus, the duke of Athens.

In Act I, Scene 1 Hippolyta and Theseus discuss their fast-approaching wedding, which will take place under the new moon in four days. Theseus declares to Hippolyta that, although he "wooed her with his sword" (which probably occurred when Theseus met the queen of the Amazons in battle), he will wed her "with pomp, with triumph, and with revelling" and he promises to begin a celebration that will continue until the wedding (I.i.19).

Hippolyta is then fairly absent in the play, appearing only with Theseus and very rarely speaking, and only then in an insignificant manner. This continues until Act V, scene I, in which she and Theseus discuss the preceding events, namely the magical romantic confusions that the Athenian youths report from the night before. While Theseus is skeptical about the veracity of their tale, Hippolyta questions whether they would all have the same story if the night's adventures were indeed imagined. Rather, she argues, the youths' agreement on the way the night's events unfolded proves that things occurred just as they say. This is close to her final significant contribution to the play.

The fact that Hippolyta stands up to Theseus when she disagrees with him in Act V is extremely significant. In Shakespeare's time, it was common practice for the wife to be the submissive, silent partner in a relationship; this is the main theme of "The Taming of the Shrew". Hippolyta's role in her relationship with Theseus is indeed striking. Ellen Rogers of Madonna University delves further into the significance of Hippolyta's role in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She states that the play is unusual in its portrayal of strong women, perhaps the most extreme case being that of the Queen of the Amazons, Hippolyta. In the Elizabethan age in which women are dependent on men, Hippolyta comes from a tribe of incredibly strong empowered women. Not only this, but she is the *leader* of this group in which men are actually dependent on the fearless women who protect them.

Rogers argues that Shakespeare uses the character of Hippolyta to enlighten his audience, who probably had negative preconceptions about the Amazonian race. It is also worth considering that her statement of "I love not to see wretchedness o'er-charged" (5.1.89), and her subsequent compassionate behavior during the Mechanicals' performance (quite different from the behavior of the other nobles present) was a not-so-subtle indication of how Shakespeare may have preferred his own audiences to behave.

As Louis Montrose notes: "Amazonian mythology seems symbolically to embody and to control a collective anxiety about the power of a female not only to dominate or reject the male but to create and destroy him."^[1] However, Hippolyta attracts Theseus with her feminine allure and charm, to such a degree that Theseus is completely smitten with her. Despite her forceful nature, she becomes the object of Theseus' passion. Rogers states that by marrying Hippolyta, Theseus is laying down his sword, "the weapon which gave him power and authority over her," and essentially surrendering to her. By the end of the play, Hippolyta has actually added to her power, becoming the queen of a new realm, Athens.^[2]

Hippolyta also appears in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, a play co-written by Shakespeare and John Fletcher

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- [2] Rogers, Ellen. "Hippolyta in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*."

Geryon

In Greek mythology, **Geryon** /ˈdʒɪəriən/ (Ancient Greek: Γηρυών; *genitive*: Γηρυόνοϋ)^[1] son of Chrysaor and Callirrhoe and grandson of Medusa, was a fearsome giant who dwelt on the island Erytheia of the mythic Hesperides in the far west of the Mediterranean. A more literal-minded later generation of Greeks associated the region with Tartessos in southern Iberia.^[2]

Geryon was often described as a monster with human faces. According to Hesiod^[3] Geryon had one body and three heads, whereas the tradition followed by Aeschylus gave him three bodies.^[4] A lost description by Stesichoros said that he has six hands

and six feet and is winged;^[5] there are some mid-sixth-century Chalcidian vases portraying Geryon as winged. Some accounts state that he had six legs as well while others state that the three bodies were joined to one pair of legs. Apart from these bizarre features, his appearance was that of a warrior. He owned a two-headed hound named Orthrus, which was the brother of Cerberus, and a herd of magnificent red cattle that were guarded by Orthrus, and a herder Eurytion, son of Erytheia.^[6]



Heracles fighting Geryon, amphora by the E Group, ca. 540 BC, Louvre

The Tenth Labour of Heracles

In the fullest account in the *Bibliothèque* of Pseudo-Apollodoros,^[7] Heracles was required to travel to Erytheia, in order to obtain the Cattle of Geryon as his tenth labour. On the way there, he crossed the Libyan desert^[8] and became so frustrated at the heat that he shot an arrow at Helios, the Sun. Helios "in admiration of his courage" gave Heracles the golden cup he used to sail across the sea from west to east each night. Heracles used it to reach Erytheia, a favorite motif of the vase-painters. Such a magical conveyance undercuts any literal geography for Erytheia, the "red island" of the sunset.

When Heracles reached Erytheia, no sooner had he landed than he was confronted by the two-headed dog, Orthrus. With one huge blow from his olive-wood club, Heracles killed the watchdog. Eurytion the herdsman came to assist Orthrus, but Heracles dealt with him the same way.

On hearing the commotion, Geryon sprang into action, carrying three shields, three spears, and wearing three helmets. He pursued Heracles at the River Anthemus but fell victim to an arrow that had been dipped in the venomous blood of the Lernaean Hydra, shot so forcefully by Heracles that it pierced Geryon's forehead, "and Geryon bent his neck over to one side, like a poppy that spoils its delicate shapes, shedding its petals all at once".^[9]

Heracles then had to herd the cattle back to Eurystheus. In Roman versions of the narrative, on the Aventine hill in Italy, Cacus stole some of the cattle as Heracles slept, making the cattle walk backwards so that they left no trail, a repetition of the trick of the young Hermes. According to some versions, Heracles drove his remaining cattle past a cave, where Cacus had hidden the stolen animals, and they began calling out to each other. In others, Caca, Cacus' sister, told Heracles where he was. Heracles then killed Cacus, and according to the Romans, founded an altar where

the Forum Boarium, the cattle market, was later held.

To annoy Heracles, Hera sent a gadfly to bite the cattle, irritate them and scatter them. The hero was within a year able to retrieve them. Hera then sent a flood which raised the level of a river so much, Heracles could not cross with the cattle. He piled stones into the river to make the water shallower. When he finally reached the court of Eurystheus, the cattle were sacrificed to Hera.

In the *Aeneid*, Vergil may have based the triple-souled figure of Erulus, king of Praeneste, on Geryon.^[10] The Herculean Sarcophagus of Genzano features a three headed representation of Geryon.^[11]

Stesichorus' *Geryoneis*

The poet Stesichorus wrote a *song of Geryon* (Γηρυονηΐς—*Geryoneis*) in the sixth century BC, which was apparently the source of this section in *Bibliothèque*; it contains the first reference to Tartessus. From the fragmentary papyri found at Oxyrhyncus^[12] it is possible (although there is no evidence) that Stesichorus inserted a character, Menoites, who reported the theft of the cattle to Geryon. Geryon then had an interview with his mother Callirrhoe, who begged him not to confront Heracles. They appear to have expressed some doubt as to whether Geryon would prove to be immortal. The gods met in council, where Athena warned Poseidon that she would protect Heracles against Poseidon's grandson Geryon. Denys Page observes that the increase in representation of the Geryon episode in vase-paintings increased from the mid-sixth century and suggests that Stesichorus' *Geryoneis* provided the impetus.

The fragments are sufficient to show that the poem was composed in twenty-six line triads, of strophe, antistrophe and epode, repeated in columns along the original scroll, facts that aided Page in placing many of the fragments, sometimes of no more than a word, in what he believed to be their proper positions.

The Inferno

In the *Inferno*, the first part of Italian poet Dante's *Divine Comedy* epic, Geryon has become the Monster of Fraud, a winged beast with the face of an honest man, the paws of a lion, the body of a wyvern, and a poisonous sting at the tip of his tail.^[13] He dwells somewhere in the depths below the cliff between the seventh and eighth circles of Hell (the circles of violence and simple fraud, respectively); Geryon rises from the pit at Virgil's call and bears the Poets to the eighth circle. To Dante's horror, the Poets ride on Geryon's back, and he slowly glides around and around the waterfall of the Phlegethon down the great depths to the Circle of Fraud.

References

[1] Also Γηρυόνης and Γηρυονεύς (*Gēryonēs* and *Gēryoneus*).

[2] The early third-century *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* notes an ancient tumulus at Gades raised over Geryon as for a Hellenic hero: "They say that they saw trees here such as are not found elsewhere upon the earth; and that these were called the trees of Geryon. There were two of them, and they grew upon the mound raised over Geryon: they were a cross between the pitch tree and the pine, and formed a third species; and blood dripped from their bark, just as gold does from the Heliad poplar" (v.5).

[3] Hesiod, *Theogony* "the triple-headed Geryon".

[4] Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*: "Or if he had died as often as reports claimed, then truly he might have had three bodies, a second Geryon, and have boasted of having taken on him a triple cloak of earth, one death for each different shape."



A Gustave Doré wood engraving of Geryon for Dante's *Inferno*

- [5] Scholiast on Hesiod's *Theogony*, referring to Stesichoros' *Geryoneis* (noted at TheoiProject (<http://www.theoi.com/Gigante/GiganteGeryon.html>)).
- [6] Erytheia, "sunset goddess" and nymph of the island that has her name, is one of the Hesperides.
- [7] Pseudo-Apollodorus. *Bibliothèque*, 2.5.10.
- [8] *Libya* was the generic name for North Africa to the Greeks.
- [9] Stesichorus, fragment, translated by Denys Page.
- [10] P.T. Eden, *A Commentary on Virgil: Aeneid VII* (Brill, 1975), p. 155 online. (http://books.google.com/books?id=B7cfAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA155&dq=Erulus+Aeneid+OR+Virgil+OR+Virgil+OR+Evander&lr=&as_drrb_is=q&as_minm_is=0&as_miny_is=&as_maxm_is=0&as_maxy_is=&num=100&as_brr=3&cd=4#v=onepage&q=Erulus+Aeneid+OR+Virgil+OR+Virgil+OR+Evander&f=false)
- [11] *Signes gravés sur les églises de l'Eure et du Calvados* by Asger Jorn, Volume II of the Bibliothèque Alexandrie, published by the Scandinavian Institute of Comparative Vandalism, 1964, p198
- [12] Denys Page 1973:138-154 gives the fragmentary Greek and pieces together a translation by overlaying the fragments with the account in *Bibliothèque*. Additional details concerning Geryon follow Page's account.
- [13] Virgil's description sounds more like a mantichore (a strange beast with a man's head, lion's body, scorpion's tail, and the occasional dragon wings in some depictions).

Further reading

- M.M. Davies, "Stesichoros' Geryoneis and its folk-tale origins". *Classical quarterly* NS 38, 1988, 277–290.
- Anne Carson, *Autobiography of Red*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998. A modern retelling of Stesichoros' fragments.

P. Curtis, Stesichoros's *Geryoneis*, Brill, 2011.

External links

- Theoi Project – "Geryon" (<http://www.theoi.com/Gigante/GiganteGeryon.html>)

Hesperides

Greek deities series	
Primordial deities	
Titans and Olympians	
Aquatic deities	
Chthonic deities	
Personified concepts	
Other deities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asclepius, <i>god of medicine</i> Leto, <i>mother of Apollo and Artemis</i> Pan, <i>shepherd god</i> 	
Nymphs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alseid Auloniad Aurai Crinaeae Dryads Eleionomae 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Naiads Napaeae Nereids Oceanids Oreads Pegaeae

• Hamadryads	• Pegasides
• Hesperides	• Pleiades
• Limnades	• Potamides
• Meliae	

In Greek mythology, the **Hesperides** (Ancient Greek: Ἑσπερίδες) are nymphs who tend a blissful garden in a far western corner of the world, located near the Atlas mountains in North Africa at the edge of the encircling Oceanus, the world-ocean.^[1]

According to the Sicilian Greek poet Stesichorus, in his poem the "Song of Geryon", and the Greek geographer Strabo, in his book *Geographika* (volume III), the Hesperides are in Tartessos, a location placed in the south of the Iberian peninsula.

By Ancient Roman times, the garden of the Hesperides had lost its archaic place in religion and had dwindled to a poetic convention, in which form it was revived in Renaissance poetry, to refer both to the garden and to the nymphs that dwelt there.

Etymology

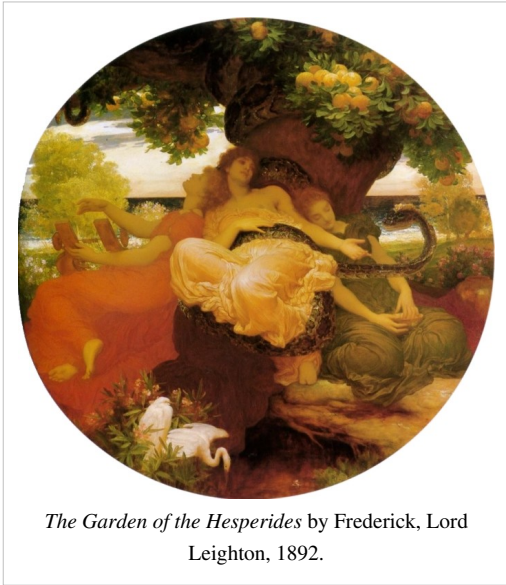
The name means *originating from Hesperus*, the evening star Venus, equivalent to *vesper*.

The Nymphs of the Evening

Ordinarily the Hesperides number three, like the other Greek triads (the Three Graces and the Moirai). "Since the Hesperides themselves are mere symbols of the gifts the apples embody, they cannot be actors in a human drama. Their abstract, interchangeable names are a symptom of their impersonality," Evelyn Harrison has observed.^[2] Nevertheless, among the names given to them, though never all at once, are Aegle ("dazzling light"), Arethusa, Erytheia (or Erytheis) and Hesperia (alternatively Hespereia, Hespere, Hespera, Hesperusa or Hesperethoosa). Lipara, Asterope and Chrysothemis are named in a Hesperide scene of the apotheosis of Heracles (romanised to Hercules) on a late fifth-century hydria by the Meidias Painter in London^[3] They are sometimes called the Western Maidens, the Daughters of Evening or *Erythrai*, and the "Sunset Goddesses", designations all apparently tied to their imagined location in the distant west. *Hesperis* is appropriately the personification of the evening (as Eos is of the dawn) and the Evening Star is Hesperus. In addition to their tending of the garden, they were said to have taken great pleasure in singing.

They are sometimes portrayed as the evening daughters of Night (*Nyx*) either alone,^[4] or with Darkness (*Erebus*),^[5] in accord with the way Eos in the farthest east, in Colchis, is the daughter of the titan Hyperion. Or they are listed as the daughters of Atlas, or of Zeus, and either Hesperius or Themis, or Phorcys and Ceto.

Erytheia ("the red one") is one of the Hesperides. The name was applied to an island close to the coast of southern Hispania, which was the site of the original Punic colony of Gades (modern Cadiz). Pliny's Natural History (4.36) records of the island of Gades: "On the side which looks towards Spain, at about 100 paces distance, is another long island, three miles wide, on which the original city of Gades stood. By Ephorus and Philistides it is called Erythia, by Timæus and Silenus Aphrodisias, and by the natives the Isle of Juno." The island was the seat of Geryon, who was overcome by Heracles.



The Garden of the Hesperides by Frederick, Lord Leighton, 1892.

The Garden of the Hesperides

The **Garden of the Hesperides** is Hera's orchard in the west, where either a single tree or a grove of immortality-giving golden apples grew. The apples were planted from the fruited branches that Gaia gave to her as a wedding gift when Hera accepted Zeus. The Hesperides were given the task of tending to the grove, but occasionally plucked from it themselves. Not trusting them, Hera also placed in the garden a never-sleeping, hundred-headed dragon named Ladon as an additional safeguard. However, in the mythology surrounding the Judgement of Paris, the Goddess of Discord Eris managed to enter the garden, pluck a golden apple, inscribe it "To the most beautiful" (Ancient Greek: Kallistei) and roll it into the wedding party (which she had not been invited to), in effect causing the Trojan Wars.

In later years it was thought that the "golden apples" might have actually been oranges, a fruit unknown to Europe and the Mediterranean before the Middle Ages. Under this assumption, the Greek botanical name chosen for all citrus species was *Hesperidoeidē* (Ἑσπεριδοειδή, "hesperidoids").

The Eleventh Labour of Heracles

After Heracles completed his first ten Labours, Eurystheus gave him two more claiming that neither the Hydra counted (because Iolaus helped Heracles) nor the Augean stables (either because he received payment for the job or because the rivers did the work). The first of these two additional Labours was to steal the apples from the garden of the Hesperides. Heracles first caught the Old Man of the Sea,^[6] the shape-shifting sea god, to learn where the Garden of the Hesperides was located.^[7]

In some variations, Heracles, either at the start or at the end of his task, meets Antaeus, who was invincible as long as he touched his mother, Gaia, the earth. Heracles killed Antaeus by holding him aloft and crushing him in a bearhug.^[8]

Herodotus claims that Heracles stopped in Egypt, where King Busiris decided to make him the yearly sacrifice, but Heracles burst out of his chains.

Finally making his way to the Garden of the Hesperides, Heracles tricked Atlas into retrieving some of the golden apples for him, by offering to hold up the heavens for a little while (Atlas was able to take them as, in this version, he was the father or otherwise related to the Hesperides). This would have made this task – like the Hydra and Augean stables – void because he had received help. Upon his return, Atlas decided that he did not want to take the heavens back, and instead offered to deliver the apples himself, but Heracles tricked him again by agreeing to take his place on condition that Atlas relieve him temporarily so that Heracles could make his cloak more comfortable. Atlas agreed, but Heracles reneged and walked away, carrying the apples. According to an alternative version, Heracles slew Ladon instead.



Hercules stealing the golden apples from the Garden of the Hesperides. Detail of a *Twelve Labours* Roman mosaic from Llíria, Spain (3rd century).

There is another variation to the story where Heracles was the only person to steal the apples, other than Perseus, although Athena later returned the apples to their rightful place in the garden. They are considered by some to be the same "apples of joy" that tempted Atalanta, as opposed to the "apple of discord" used by Eris to start a beauty contest on Olympus (which caused "The Siege of Troy").

On Attic pottery, especially from the late fifth century, Heracles is depicted sitting in bliss in the Gardens of the Hesperides, attended by the maidens.

The Hesperides in the Renaissance

With the revival of classical allusions in the Renaissance, the Hesperides returned to their prominent position, and the garden itself took on the name of its nymphs: Robert Greene wrote of "The fearful Dragon... that watched the garden called Hesperides".^[9] Shakespeare inserted the comically insistent rhyme "is not Love a Hercules, Still climbing trees in the Hesperides" in *Love's Labours Lost* (iv.iii) and John Milton mentioned the "ladies of the Hesperides" in *Paradise Regained* (ii.357). 'Hesperides' (published 1647) was the title of a collection of pastoral and religious verse by the Royalist poet Robert Herrick.

Notes

- [1] A confusion of the Garden of the Hesperides with an equally idyllic Arcadia is a modern one, conflating Sir Philip Sidney's *Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* and Robert Herrick's *Hesperides*: both are viewed by Renaissance poets as oases of bliss, but they were not connected by the Greeks. The development of *Arcadia* as an imagined setting for pastoral is the contribution of Theocritus to Hellenistic culture: see *Arcadia* (utopia).
- [2] Evelyn B. Harrison, "Hesperides and Heroes: A Note on the Three-Figure Reliefs", *Hesperia* 33.1 (January 1964 pp. 76–82) pp 79–80.
- [3] Illustrated in Harrison 1964:plate 13. Beyond the group sits Hygeia, perhaps giving rise to a mistaken impression that there might be four Hesperides. Sometimes two of the three are represented with Heracles when the symmetry of a composition requires it, as in the so-called "Three-Figure Reliefs". A good survey of the Hesperides' representations on fourth-century vases is Dieter Metzler, *Les représentations dans la céramique attique du IVe siècle* (1951) pp 204–10.
- [4] Hesiod, *Theogony* 215 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hes.Th.215&lang=original>)
- [5] Hyginus, *Fabulae* Preface (<http://www.theoi.com/Text/HyginusFabulae1.html>); Cicero *De Natura Deorum* 3.44 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:2007.01.0037:book=3:section=44>)
- [6] Kerenyi, *The Heroes of the Greeks*, 1959, p.172, identifies him in this context as Nereus; as a shape-shifter he is often identified as Proteus.
- [7] In some versions of the tale, Heracles was directed to ask Prometheus. As payment, he freed Prometheus from his daily torture. This tale is more usually found in the position of the Erymanthian Boar, since it is associated with Chiron choosing to forgo immortality and taking Prometheus' place.
- [8] Apollodorus ii. 5; Hyginus, *Fab.* 31
- [9] Greene, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (published 1594)

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External links

- The Theoi Project, "The Hesperides" (<http://www.theoi.com/Titan/Hesperides.html>)
 - 'The Garden of the Hesperides' (<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/picture-of-month/displaypicture.asp?venue=7&id=137>) in the Lady Lever Art Gallery (<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ladylever/index.asp>)
 - JC Loudon on the Gardens of Hesperides (1835) (http://www.gardenvisit.com/book/history_of_garden_design_and_gardening/chapter_1_gardening_in_the_ancient_world/gardens_of_hesperides)
 - Ms.Julia Delphine Parkinson
-

The Twelfth Labor of Heracles



An ancient Etruscan vase from Caere (ca 525 BC) depicting Heracles presenting Cerberus to Eurystheus.

Capturing Cerberus, without using weapons, was the final labour assigned to Heracles (Hercules) by King Eurystheus, in recompense for the killing of his own children by Megara after he was driven insane by Hera, and therefore was the most dangerous and difficult.

After having been given the task, Heracles went to Eleusis to be initiated in the Eleusinian Mysteries so that he could learn how to enter and exit the underworld alive, and in passing absolve himself for killing centaurs. He found the entrance to the underworld at Tanaerum, and Athena and Hermes helped him to traverse the entrance in each direction. He passed Charon with Hestia's assistance and his own heavy and fierce frowning.

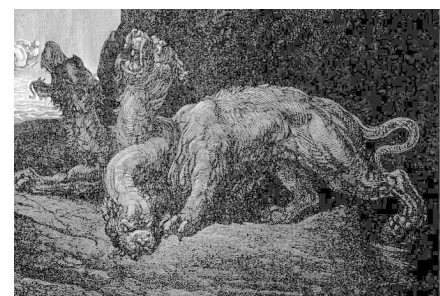
Whilst in the underworld, Heracles met Theseus and Pirithous. The two companions had been imprisoned by Hades for attempting to kidnap Persephone. One tradition tells of snakes coiling around their legs then turning into stone; another that Hades feigned hospitality and prepared a feast inviting them to sit. They unknowingly sat in chairs of forgetfulness and were permanently ensnared. When Heracles had pulled Theseus first from his chair, some of his thigh stuck to it (this explains the supposedly lean thighs of Athenians), but the earth shook at the attempt to liberate Pirithous, whose desire to have the wife of a god for himself was so insulting he was doomed to stay behind.

Heracles found Hades and asked permission to bring Cerberus to the surface, which Hades agreed to if Heracles could overpower the beast without using weapons. Heracles was able to overpower Cerberus and proceeded to sling the beast over his back, dragging it out of the underworld through a cavern entrance in the Peloponnese and bringing it to Eurystheus. The king was so frightened of the beast that he jumped into a pithos, and asked Heracles to return it to the underworld in return for releasing him from his labors.

Literature

Cerberus featured in many prominent works of Greek and Roman literature, most famously in Virgil's *Aeneid*, Peisandros of Rhodes' epic poem the *Labours of Hercules*, the story of Orpheus in Plato's *Symposium*, and in Homer's *Iliad*, which is the only known reference to one of Heracles' labours which first appeared in a literary source.^[9]

The depiction of Cerberus is relatively consistent between different works and authors, the common theme of the mane of serpents is kept across works, as is the serpent's tail, most literary works of the era describe Cerberus as having three heads with the only notable exception being Hesiod's *Theogony* in which he had 50 heads.^[10]



Cerberus, as illustrated by Gustave Doré in Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Most occurrences in ancient literature revolve around the basis of the threat of Cerberus being overcome to allow a living being access to the underworld; in the *Aeneid* Cerberus was lulled to sleep after being tricked into eating drugged honeycakes and Orpheus put the creature to sleep with his music. Capturing Cerberus alive was the twelfth and final labour of Heracles. In Dante Alighieri's *Inferno*, Canto VI, the "great worm" Cerberus is found in the Third Circle of Hell, where he oversees and rends to pieces those who have succumbed to gluttony, one of the seven deadly sins.^[11]

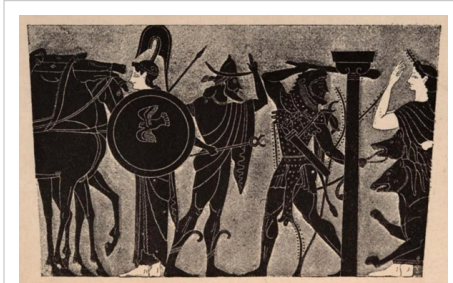
In the constellation Cerberus introduced by Johannes Hevelius in 1687, Cerberus is sometimes substituted for the "branch from the tree of the golden apples" fetched by Atlas from the garden of the Hesperides.^[12] This branch is the

literary source of the "golden bough" in the *Aeneid* by Virgil.

In *Paradise Lost* 11.65, Cerberean hounds are mentioned in Hell: "A cry of Hell Hounds never ceasing bark'd With wide Cerberean mouths full loud".

Art

Numerous references to Cerberus have appeared in ancient Greek and Roman art,^[13] found in archaeological ruins and often including in statues and architecture, inspired by the mythology of the creature. Cerberus' depiction in ancient art is not as definitive as in literature; the poets and linguists of ancient Greece and Rome mostly agreed on the physical appearance (with the notable exception in Hesiod's *Theogony* in which he had 50 heads).^[10] His depiction in classical art mostly shows the recurring motif of serpents, but the number of heads differs.^[14] A statue in the Galleria Borghese depicts Cerberus with three heads sitting by the side of Hades, while a bronze sculpture depicting Heracles' twelfth labour shows the demi-god leading a two-headed Cerberus from the underworld. The majority of vases depicting the twelfth task also show Cerberus as having two heads.^[15] Classical critics have identified one of the earliest works of Cerberus as "the most imaginative," that being a Laconian vase created around 560 BC in which Cerberus is shown with three-heads and with rows of serpents covering his body and heads.^[16]



In this vase painting, Heracles leads a two-headed Cerberus out of Hades.

Explanations

There have been many attempts to explain the depiction of Cerberus. A 2nd century CE Greek known as Heraclitus the paradoxographer--- not to be confused with the 5th century BCE Greek philosopher Heraclitus--- claimed Euhemeristically that Cerberus had two pups which were never away from their father, as such Cerberus was in fact a normal (however very large) dog but artists incorporating the two pups into their work made it appear as if his two children were in fact extra heads.^[17] Classical historians have dismissed Heraclitus the paradoxographer's explanation as "feeble".^[18] Mythologers have speculated that if Cerberus was given his name in Triakrenos it could be interpreted as "three karenos".^[18] Certain experts believe that the monster was inspired by the golden jackal.^[19]

In popular culture

Further information: Greek mythology in popular culture#Cerberus

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- [3] "Yahoo! Deduction" (<http://education.yahoo.com/reference/dictionary/entry/Cerberus>). .
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The Argonauts

Argonauts

The **Argonauts** (Ancient Greek: Ἀργοναῦται, *Argonautai*; Georgian: არგონავტები, *Argonavtebi*) were a band of heroes in Greek mythology who, in the years before the Trojan War, accompanied Jason to Colchis (ancient Georgian Kingdom) in his quest to find the Golden Fleece. Their name comes from their ship, the *Argo*, which was named after its builder, Argus. "Argonauts", therefore, literally means "Argo sailors". They were sometimes called Minyans, after a prehistoric tribe of the area.

Story

After the death of King Cretheus, the Aeolian Pelias usurped the Iolcan throne from his half-brother Aeson and became king of Iolcus in Thessaly (near the modern city of Volos). Because of this unlawful act, an oracle warned him that a descendant of Aeolus would seek revenge. Pelias put to death every prominent descendant of Aeolus he could, but spared Aeson because of the pleas of their mother Tyro. Instead, Pelias kept Aeson prisoner and forced him to renounce his inheritance. Aeson married Alcimede, who bore him a son named Diomedes. Pelias intended to kill the baby at once, but Alcimede summoned her kinswomen to weep over him as if he were stillborn. She faked a burial and smuggled the baby to Mount Pelion. He was raised by the centaur Chiron, who changed the boy's name to Jason.

When Jason was 20 years old, an oracle ordered him to dress as a Magnesian and head to the Iolcan court. While traveling Jason lost his sandal crossing the muddy Anavros river while helping an old woman (Hera in disguise). The goddess was angry with King Pelias for killing his stepmother Sidero after she had sought refuge in Hera's temple.

Another oracle warned Pelias to be on his guard against a man with one shoe. Pelias was presiding over a sacrifice to Poseidon with several neighboring kings in attendance. Among the crowd stood a tall youth in leopard skin with only one sandal. Pelias recognized that Jason was his cousin. He could not kill him because prominent kings of the Aeolian family were present. Instead, he asked Jason: "What would you do if an oracle announced that one of your fellow-citizens were destined to kill you?". Jason replied that he would send him to go and fetch the Golden Fleece, not knowing that Hera had put those words in his mouth.

Jason learned later that Pelias was being haunted by the ghost of Phrixus. Phrixus had fled from Orchomenus riding on a divine ram to avoid being sacrificed and took refuge in Colchis where he was later denied proper burial. According to an oracle, Iolcus would never prosper unless his ghost was taken back in a ship, together with the golden ram's fleece. This fleece now hung from a tree in the grove of the Colchian Ares, guarded night and day by a dragon that never slept. Pelias swore before Zeus that he would give up the throne at Jason's return while expecting that Jason's attempt to steal the Golden Fleece would be a fatal enterprise. However, Hera acted in Jason's favour



Gathering of the Argonauts (?), Attic red-figure krater, 460–450 BC, Louvre (G 341)



The *Argo*, by Lorenzo Costa

during the perilous journey.

Jason was accompanied by some of the principal heroes of ancient Greece. The number of Argonauts varies, but usually totals between 40 and 55; traditional versions of the story place their number at 50.

Some have hypothesized that the legend of the Golden Fleece was based on a practice of the Black Sea tribes; they would place a lamb's fleece at the bottom of a stream to entrap gold dust being washed down from upstream. This practice is still in use, particularly in the Svaneti region of Georgia. See Golden Fleece for other, more speculative interpretations.

The crew of the Argo

There is no definite list of the Argonauts. The following list is collated from several lists given in ancient sources.^{[1][2][3]}

1. Acastus
 2. Actor (son of Hippas)
 3. Admetus
 4. Aethalides
 5. Amphiaraus
 6. Amphidamas
 7. Amphion (son of Hyperasius)
 8. Ancaeus
 9. Areius
 10. Argus (builder of *Argo*)
 11. Argus (son of Phrixus)
 12. Ascalaphus
 13. Asclepius
 14. Asterion (son of Cometes)
 15. Asterius (brother of Amphion)
 16. Atalanta
 17. Augeas
 18. Autolycus, son of Deimachus
 19. Bellerophon
 20. Butes
 21. Calais (son of Boreas)
 22. Caeneus (son of Coronus)
 23. Canthus
 24. Castor (son of Zeus)
 25. Cepheus, King of Tegea
 26. Clytius (son of Eurytus)
 27. Coronus (son of Caeneus)
 28. Cytissorus
 29. Deucalion of Crete
 30. Echion
 31. Eribotes
 32. Erginus (son of Poseidon)
 33. Erytus (brother of Echion)
 34. Euphemus
 35. Euryalus
-

36. Eurydamas
 37. Eurymedon (son of Dionysus)
 38. Eurytion
 39. Heracles (son of Zeus)
 40. Hippalcimus
 41. Hylas
 42. Idas
 43. Idmon
 44. Iolaus (nephew of Heracles)
 45. Iphitos
 46. Jason
 47. Laërtes
 48. Laocoön (half-brother of Oeneus and tutor of Meleager)
 49. Leitus
 50. Leodocus
 51. Lynceus
 52. Medea
 53. Melas
 54. Meleager
 55. Menoetius
 56. Mopsus
 57. Nauplius
 58. Neleus (son of Poseidon)
 59. Nestor
 60. Oileus
 61. Orpheus
 62. Palaemon
 63. Palaimonius (son of Hephaestus)
 64. Peleus
 65. Peneleos
 66. Perseus
 67. Periclymenus
 68. Phalerus
 69. Phanus (brother of Staphylus and Eurymedon)
 70. Philoctetes
 71. Phlias (son of Dionysus)
 72. Phocus
 73. Phrontis
 74. Poeas
 75. Prias (brother of Phocus)
 76. Pollux (son of Zeus)
 77. Polyphemus
 78. Staphylus
 79. Talaus
 80. Telamon
 81. Thersanon (son of Helios and Leucothoe)
 82. Theseus
-

83. Tiphys

84. Zetes (son of Boreas)

Several more names are discoverable from other sources. Amyrus, eponym of a Thessalian city, is given by Stephanus of Byzantium as "one of the Argonauts";^[4] he is otherwise said to have been a son of Poseidon and to have given his name to the river Amyrus.^[5] Azorus was the helmsman of Argo according to Hesychius of Alexandria;^[6] he could be the same as the Azorus mentioned by Stephanus as founder of the city Azorus in Pelagonia.^[7]

Notes to the list

- Atalanta is included on the list by Pseudo-Apollodorus, but Apollonius^[8] claims that Jason forbade her because she was a woman and could cause strife in the otherwise all-male crew. Other sources state that she was asked, but refused.
- Apollonius also claims that Theseus and Pirithous were trapped in Hades at the time and could not join.^[9]
- Theseus being on the list is inconsistent with accounts of his life usually including him encountering Medea at an early stage of his adventures, yet many years after the Argonauts completed their adventure (Medea, by that time, was not only abandoned by Jason, but also bore a child from Aegeus).^[10]
- Argus, Phrontis, Melas and Cytissorus, sons of Phrixus and Chalciope, joined the crew only after being rescued by the Argonauts: the four had been stranded on a desert island not far from Colchis, from where they initially sailed with an intent to reach their father's homeland.^[11] However, Argus is not to be confused with the other Argus, son of Arestor or Polybus, constructor and eponym of the ship Argo and member of the crew from the beginning.^[12]

Adaptations of the myth

Literature

- *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867) by William Morris
- *Hercules, My Shipmate* (1945) by Robert Graves
- *The Greek Myths* by Robert Graves
- *Jason and Medea* by John Gardner, a modern, epic poem in English.
- The *Argonautica* by Gaius Valerius Flaccus, a first-century AD Latin epic poem.
- The *Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes, a Hellenistic, Greek epic poem.
- *Despoiled Shore Medea Material Landscape with Argonauts* (1982) -- a play in the synthetic fragment form by Heiner Müller
- In comics, outside of a comic book adaptation of the film *Jason and the Argonauts* published by Dell Comics in 1963 as part of their *Movie Classics* series, there were 2 series that featured The Argonauts alongside Jason. The first was a 5 issue series published by Caliber Press in 1991,^[13] while the other was a series called *Jason and the Argonauts: Kingdom of Hades*, a 5 issue mini-series, published by Bluewater Comics in 2007.^[14] In 2011, Campfire Books published a graphic novel called *Jason and the Argonauts* written by Dan Whitehead.^[15]
- *The heroes of Olympus* by Rick Riordan is loosely based on a modern version of the story of Jason and the Argonauts. The myth is mentioned on several occasions.

Film and Television

A Soviet cartoon called "The Argonauts" was made in 1971.

Two movies titled *Jason and the Argonauts* have been made, and a film entitled *Rise of the Argonauts* is in production but is not an adaptation and will act as a prequel to the first film. This film will be released sometime in spring 2011.

Jason and the Argonauts (1963), directed by Don Chaffey and featuring special effects by Ray Harryhausen, shows Jason hosting Olympics-like games and selecting his crew from among the winners.

A Hallmark presentation TV movie, *Jason and the Argonauts* (2000), on the other hand, shows Jason having to settle for men with no sailing experience. This includes a thief who says "Who better than a thief to grab the Golden Fleece?"

A movie titled "Веселая хроника опасного путешествия" (Amusing Chronicle of a Dangerous Voyage) was made in the Soviet Union in 1986 starring a famous Russian actor Alexander Abdulov. (imdb ^[16])

The 1977 Doctor Who serial 'Underworld' is loosely based on the story of Jason and the Argonauts.

Music

British Rock group XTC recorded a song entitled *Jason and the Argonauts*, to be found on their album *English Settlement* (1982).

Radio

In 2001, a radio drama adaptation of Apollonius' *Argonautica* was presented on the *Radio Tales* series for National Public Radio.

Video games

Jason and the Argo, along with a small number of the more legendary Argonauts and Greeks, were featured in the 2008 video game *Rise of the Argonauts*

Notes

[1] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 1. 23 - 228

[2] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 1. 9. 16

[3] Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 14

[4] Stephanus of Byzantium s. v. *Amyros*

[5] Scholia on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 1. 596. The Argonauts are reported to have sailed past this river by both Apollonius (1. 596) and Valerius Flaccus (2. 11)

[6] Hesychius s. v. *Azōros*

[7] Stephanus of Byzantium s. v. *Azōros*

[8] *Arg.* 1. 770

[9] *Arg.* 1. 100

[10] Roger Lancelyn Green, in his *Tales of the Greek Heroes*, gets round this problem by suppressing the name of the witch-wife who Theseus encountered in his early life.

[11] *Arg.* 2. 1193

[12] *Arg.* 1. 112; Hyg. *Fab.* 14

[13] <http://www.comics.org/series/14638/covers/>

[14] <http://www.comics.org/series/28766/>

[15] <http://campfiregraphicnovels.wordpress.com/mythology/jason-and-the-argonauts-dan-whitehead/>

[16] <http://imdb.com/title/tt0267092/>

References

- Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* I, 23–227
- Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* I, ix, 16.
- Ken Inglis, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932–1983*, 2006

External links

- Argonauts Information and Gallery (<http://www.theinformationarchives.com/argonauts/>)
- Definition of an "argonaut". (<http://www.theargonauts.com/about/whatisanargonaut.shtml>)
- and the Argonauts ([http://neilixandria.com/index.php/Jason_and_the_Argonauts_\(The_Argonautica\)](http://neilixandria.com/index.php/Jason_and_the_Argonauts_(The_Argonautica)))"Jason)
Full English translation by R.C. Seaton

Acastus

Acastus (Ἀκάστος /əˈkæstəs/; Ancient Greek: Ἀκάστος) is a character in Greek mythology. He sailed with Jason and the Argonauts, and participated in the hunt for the Calydonian Boar.^[1]

Biography

Acastus was the son of Pelias, then king of Iolcus, and Anaxibia (Philomache in some traditions).

After the return of the Argonauts, Acastus's sisters were seduced by Medea to cut their father Pelias in pieces and boil them. Acastus, when he heard this, buried his father, and drove Jason and Medea from Iolcus (and, according to Pausanias, his sisters also),^[2] and instituted funeral games in honor of his father.^{[3][4]} He thereafter became king of Iolcus.

Acastus purified Peleus of the murder of King Eurytion of Phthia. Acastus's wife (variously named in mythology; often Astydamia, but sometimes Hippolyte, daughter of Cretheus)^{[1][4]} fell in love with Peleus but he scorned her. Bitter, she sent a messenger to Antigone, Peleus's wife and daughter of Eurytion, to tell her that Peleus was to marry Acastus's daughter, Steropes.

Astydamia then told Acastus that Peleus had tried to rape her.^[5] Acastus took Peleus on a hunting trip and hid his sword while he slept, then abandoned him on Mt. Pelion to be killed by centaurs. The wise centaur Chiron (or the god Hermes)^[4] returned Peleus' sword and Peleus managed to escape. With Jason and the Dioscuri, Peleus sacked Iolcus, dismembered Astydamia (and, in some accounts, Acastus himself), and marched his army between the pieces. Their kingdom later fell to Jason's son Thessalus.


Descendants

Acastus and Astydameia had two daughters: Sterope (Στερόπη) and Laodamia, and a number of sons. Another daughter, Sthenele (Σθενέλη), was given by the *Bibliotheca* as the wife of Menoetius and mother of Patroclus. Tzetzes (in his *Prolegomena in Hesiodum*) calls Arxippus a son of his.

References

- ↑ Hornblower, Simon (1996). "Acastus". *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 3.
- ↑ Pausanias vii. 11
- ↑ Gaius Julius Hyginus *Fabulae* 24 and 273 ; Apollod. i. 9. § 27, &c.; Pausanias iii. 18. § 9, vi. 20. § 9, v. 17. § 4 ; Ov. Met. xi. 409, &c.
- ↑ *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* by William Smith (1867).
- ↑ Apollod. iii. 13. § 2, &c.; Pind. Nem. iv. 90, &c.

Sources

-  This article incorporates text from a publication now in the public domain: Smith, William, ed. (1867). "article name needed". *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*.

Admetus

In Greek mythology, **Admetus** (♂ /ædˈmiːtəs/; Greek: Ἀδμήτος *Admetos*, "untamed", "untameable")^{[1][2]} was a king of Pherae in Thessaly, succeeding his father Pheres after whom the city was named. Admetus was one of the Argonauts and took part in the Calydonian Boar hunt. His wife Alcestis offered to substitute her own death for his.

Mythology

Admetus was famed for his hospitality and justice. When Apollo was sentenced to a year of servitude to a mortal as punishment for killing Delphyne, or as later tradition has it, the Cyclops, the god chose Admetus' home and became his herdsman. Apollo in recompense for Admetus' treatment—the Hellenistic poet Callimachus of Alexandria^[3] makes him Apollo's *eromenos*—made all the cows bear twins while he served as his cowherd.^[4]

Apollo also helped Admetus win the hand of Alcestis, the daughter of Pelias, king of Iolcus. Alcestis had so many suitors that Pelias set an apparently impossible task to the suitors—to win the hand of Alcestis, they must yoke a boar and a lion to a chariot. Apollo harnessed the yoke with the animals^[5] and Admetus drove the chariot to Pelias, and thus married Alcestis.

Admetus, however, neglected to sacrifice to Artemis. The offended goddess filled the bridal chamber with snakes and again, Apollo came to Admetus' aid. Apollo advised Admetus to sacrifice to Artemis, and the goddess removed the snakes.

The greatest aid Apollo gave to Admetus was persuading the Fates to reprieve Admetus of his fated day of death. According to Aeschylus Apollo made the Fates drunk, and the Fates agreed to reprieve Admetus if he could find someone to die in his place.^[6] Admetus initially believed that one of his aged parents would happily take their son's place of death. When they were unwilling, Alcestis instead died for Admetus.

The scene of death is described in Euripides' play *Alcestis*, where Thanatos, the god of death, takes Alcestis to the Underworld. As Alcestis descends, Admetus discovers that he actually does not want to live:

"I think my wife's fate is happier than my own, even though it may not seem so. No pain will ever touch her now, and she has ended life's many troubles with glory. But I, who have escaped my fate and ought not to be alive, shall now live out my life in sorrow."

The situation was saved by Heracles, who rested at Pherae on his way towards the man-eating Mares of Diomedes. Heracles was greatly impressed by Admetus's kind treatment of him as a guest, and when told of Admetus' situation, he entered Alcestis' tomb. He repaid the honor Admetus had done to him by wrestling with Thanatos until the god agreed to release Alcestis, then led her back into the mortal world. The most famous of Admetus's children was Eumelus, who led a contingent from Pherae to fight in the Trojan War. He also had a daughter Perimele.



Etruscan vase depiction of the farewell of Admetus and Alcestis.

References

- [1] Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* rev. ed. 1960 (index).
- [2] Karl Kerényi, *The Gods of the Greeks*, 1951:138.
- [3] Callimachus, *Hymn to Apollo*.
- [4] *Bibliothèque*, 3.10.4.
- [5] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliothèque* 1.9.15; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 50
- [6] Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, 728.
- March, J. *Cassell's Dictionary Of Classical Mythology*. London, 1999. ISBN 0-304-35161-X

Aethalides

Aethalides (Ancient Greek: Αἰθαλίδης) was a son of Hermes and Eupolemeia, a daughter of Myrmidon.^[1] He was the herald of the Argonauts, and had received from his father the faculty of remembering everything, even in Hades. He was further allowed to reside alternately in the upper and in the lower world. As his soul could not forget anything even after death, it remembered that from the body of Aethalides it had successively migrated into those of Euphorbus, Hermotimus, Pyrrhus, and at last into that of Pythagoras, in whom it still retained the recollection of its former migrations.^{[2][3][4][5][6]}

References

- [1] Schmitz, Leonhard (1867), "Aethalides" (<http://www.ancientlibrary.com/smith-bio/0058.html>), in Smith, William, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, **1**, Boston, MA, pp. 49,
- [2] Apollonius of Rhodes, i. 54, 640, &c.
- [3] *Argonautica Orphica* 131
- [4] Gaius Julius Hyginus, *Fabulae* 14
- [5] Diogenes Laërtius, viii. 1. § 4, &c.
- [6] Gaius Valerius Flaccus, i.437

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Amphion

There are several characters named **Amphion** (Ancient Greek: Ἀμφίων) in Greek mythology:

- **Amphion**, son of Zeus and Antiope, and twin brother of Zethus (see Amphion and Zethus). Together they are famous for building Thebes. Amphion married Niobe, and killed himself after the loss of his wife and children (the Niobids) at the hands of Apollo and Artemis. Diodorus Siculus calls Chloris his daughter,^[1] but the other accounts of her parentage identify her father as another Amphion, the ruler of Minyan Orchomenus (see below).
- **Amphion**, son of Iasus and Persephone (a mortal woman, not the wife of Hades). This Amphion is an obscure character, said to be a king of the Minyans of Orchomenus, in Boeotia.
- **Amphion**, son of Hyperasius; he and his brother Asterius were Argonauts.^[2]
- **Amphion** the Epean, of Elis, who took part in the Trojan War on the side of the Greeks.^[3]

References

[1] Diodorus Siculus, 4.68.6.

[2] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 1.176.

[3] Homer, *Iliad* 13.685–93.

Ancaeus

The name **Ancaeus** or **Ankaïos** (Ἀγκᾱῖος) is attributed to two heroes in Greek mythology. Both were among the Argonauts, and each met his death at the tusks of a boar. They are often confused with one another.

Ancaeus of Arcadia

Ancaeus, son of King Lycurgus of Arcadia, was both an Argonaut and a participant in the Calydonian Boar hunt, in which he met his end. His arms were ominously hidden at home, but he set forth, dressed in a bearskin and armed only with a *labrys* (λάβρυς "doubled-bladed axe"). His wife was named Iotis, and his mother was either Cleophyle or Eurynome according to one account, or Antinoe according to another one. Ancaeus' son Agapenor led the Arcadian forces during the Trojan War.

Ancaeus of Samos

Ancaeus was king of the island of Samos, and an Argonaut: helmsmanship was his special skill.^[1] He was a son of Poseidon and Astypalaea, and brother of Eurypylus.^[2] By other accounts his father was the Lelegian king Altes, which accords well with Ancaeus's rule over the Leleges of Samos. According to a lost epic of his house, sung by the Samian poet Asios, he married Samia, daughter of the river god Maeander, who bore him Perilaus, Enudus, Samus, Alitherses, and Parthenope, the mother of Lycomedes.^[3] The most famous story surrounding this Ancaeus is the following: When planting a vineyard, for Samos was famed for its wine, he was told by a seer that he would never taste its wine. Ancaeus then joined the voyage of the Argonauts, and returned home safely, by which time the grapes were ripe and had been made into wine. He summoned the seer before him, and raised a cup of his own wine to his lips, and was ready to taste it for the first time. He then mocked the seer, who retorted, "There is many a slip between the cup and the lip" (Πολλὰ μεταξὺ πέλει κύλικος καὶ Χείλεος ἀκροῦ). Before Ancaeus had tasted the wine, an alarm was raised that a wild boar was ravaging the vineyard, and on hearing this, Ancaeus dropped the cup and went out to investigate – and was promptly killed by the boar.^[4]

References

- [1] *Argonautica*, 2.866ff.
- [2] *Argonautica*, 1.186.
- [3] Pausanias. *Description of Greece*, 7.4.1.
- [4] Pausanias. *Description of Greece*, 1.30.4 and 5.15.6.

External links

- Theioi Project - Poseidon and Astypalaia (<http://www.theoi.com/Erotes/Poseidon+Astypalaia.html>)

Atalanta

Atalanta (Ancient Greek: Ἀταλάντη, *Atalantē*, "balanced") is a character in Greek mythology.

Legend

Atalanta was the daughter of Iasus (or Mainalos or Schoeneus, according to Hyginus), a Boeotian (according to Hesiod) or an Arcadian princess (according to the *Bibliotheca*). She is often described as a goddess. The *Bibliotheca* is the only one who gives an account of Atalanta's birth and upbringing. King Iasus wanted a son; when Atalanta was born, he left her on a mountaintop to die. Some stories say that a she-bear suckled and cared for Atalanta until hunters found and raised her, and she learned to fight and hunt as a bear would. She was later reunited with her father.

Having grown up in the wilderness, Atalanta became a fierce hunter and was always happy. She took an oath of virginity to the goddess Artemis.



Peleus and Atalanta wrestling, black-figured hydria, ca. 550 BC, Staatliche Antikensammlungen (Inv. 596).

Calydonian boar hunt

When Artemis was forgotten at a sacrifice by King Oineus, she was angered and sent a wild boar that ravaged the land, men, and cattle and prevented crops from being sown. Atalanta joined Meleager and many other famous heroes on a hunt for the boar. Many of the men were angry that a woman was joining them, but Meleager, though married, lusted for Atalanta, and so he persuaded them to include her. Several of the men were killed before Atalanta became the first to hit the boar and draw blood. After Meleager finally killed the boar with his spear, he awarded the skin to Atalanta. Meleager's uncles, Plexippus and Toxeus, were angry and tried to take the skin from her. In revenge, Meleager killed his uncles. Wild with grief, Meleager's mother Althaea threw a charmed log on the fire, which consumed Meleager's life as it burned.



Jacob Jordaens - Meleager and Atalanta -
WGA11997

Footrace

After the Calydonian boar hunt, Atalanta was rediscovered by her father. He wanted her to be wed, but Atalanta, uninterested in marriage, agreed to marry only if her suitors could outrun her in a footrace. Those who lost would be killed. King Schoeneus agreed, and many young men died in the attempt until Melanion (or Hippomenes) came along. Melanion asked the goddess Aphrodite for help, and she gave him three golden apples in order to slow Atalanta down. The apples were irresistible, so every time Atalanta got ahead of Melanion, he rolled an apple ahead of her, and she would run after it. In this way, Melanion won the footrace and came to marry Atalanta. Eventually they had a son Parthenopaios, who was one of the Seven against Thebes. Zeus (or Cybele, or Rhea) turned Atalanta and Melanion into lions after they made love together in one of his temples. Other accounts say that Aphrodite changed them into lions because they did not give her proper honor. The belief at the time was that lions could not mate with their own species, only with leopards; thus Atalanta and Hippomenes would never be able to remain with one another.

In some versions of the quest for the Golden Fleece, for instance that published by Robert Graves in 1944, Atalanta sailed with the Argonauts as the only female among them. She jumped aboard the ship soon after the expedition set out, invoking the protection of Artemis, whose virgin priestess she was. She was following Meleager who had put away his young wife for Atalanta's sake. Atalanta returned his love but was prevented by an oracle from consummating their union, being warned that losing her virginity would prove disastrous for her. In disappointment Meleager joined the Argo, but Atalanta would not let him out of her sight. She plays a major part in various adventures of Jason's crew, suffered injury in a battle at Colchis, and was healed by Medea.

The *Bibliotheca* also says she wrestled and defeated Peleus at the funeral games for Pelias. Apollonius of Rhodes, on the other hand, claims Jason would not allow a woman on the ship because she would cause strife on the otherwise all-male expedition (Argonautica 1.769-73).

Cultural depictions

Handel wrote a 1736 opera about the character, *Atalanta*. In the 20th century, Robert Ashley also wrote an opera, *Atalanta* (Acts of God), with loose allegorical connections to the myth. Other works based on the myth include a play by Algernon Charles Swinburne, *Atalanta in Calydon*, written (in the style of Greek tragedy) in 1865.

A version of Atalanta appears in three episodes of the television series *Hercules: the Legendary Journeys*: "Ares", "Let the Games Begin" and "If I Had a Hammer", played by Corey Everson. In this version, she is a Spartan blacksmith, as well as a superior athlete. She has a crush on Hercules and unsuccessfully tries to seduce him many times. An Atalanta action figure was included in the *Hercules* toy line.

Atalanta features prominently in the Hallmark mini-series of *Jason and the Argonauts* where she is played by Olga Sosnovska. This version depicts her as being a childhood friend of Jason's and abruptly joining the voyage despite his protests. On the Isle of Lemnos it is she who discovers Hypsipyle's plan and saves them. Later on in the story she confesses that she loves Jason but he views her as a sister, preferring Medea. Although she is unhappy at this rejection there are hints of a possible romance between her and a thief throughout the mini-series.

Animation

A cartoon version of the story of Atalanta's foot race^[1] was included in *Free to Be... You and Me*, a record album and illustrated songbook first released in November 1972, and later in 1974 as a television special. It is presented as the story of a Princess Atalanta, whose father the King wants her to marry. The story highlights Atalanta's role as a feminist figure, where she is a skilled athlete and gifted astronomer. She makes an agreement with her father that she will marry only if there is a man as fast as her, confident there is no such man as fast as her. Meanwhile, a man known only as 'Young John' is seen training, and after seeing he completed a track run before an hourglass expired he feels confident enough to compete in the race. While she beats almost all the men in the foot race, she ties Young John, who is then awarded her hand in marriage by the King (Contrary to the original story in which he cheated in the race by winning a goddess' favor). Young John refuses the prize, saying he could not possibly marry the princess unless she wished to marry him, and that he ran the race for the chance to get to know Atalanta. Atalanta agrees that she could not possibly marry John without first going off to see the world. The two part as friends, going off to travel the world individually. The fable ends with, "Perhaps someday they'll be married, and perhaps they will not. In any case, it is certain, they are both living happily ever after.", reinforcing the feminist message of the tale.

Video games

In the Nintendo Game Boy Advance game, *Golden Sun*, and its sequel *Golden Sun: The Lost Age*, Atalanta (the Heavenly Huntress) is a second-level Jupiter element Summon that requires the use of 2 Jupiter Djinn to summon. She throws a volley of green arrows to all the enemies on screen.

In the 1997 Sega Saturn/Sony Playstation game *Herc's Adventures*, she is a playable character.

In the PC game *Poseidon* (an expansion pack for *Zeus: Master of Olympus*), the player can summon Atalanta to fulfill quests given to the player by the Gods, namely Artemis. She will say the line "this city is as wonderful as a golden apple" if your city is especially liked. Atalanta can also be summoned if the player's city is attacked by a Sphinx or four Harpies.

In the videogame *Rise of the Argonauts*, Atalanta appears as a headstrong huntress who was orphaned at a young age and raised by centaurs on the island of Saria. She joins the crew of the Argo and can assist the player, as Jason, with her archery.

She appears as a minor hero in the game *Age of Mythology*.

Atalanta is also the name of Cassandra's armor parts in *Soul Calibur IV*

Comic books

In 2000, the Belgian comic book artist and writer Crisse (Didier Chrispeels) introduced the first of a series of comic books featuring Atalanta, who is also abandoned by her father but saved by goddesses and nurtured by a bear. She is adopted by the hunters who killed the bear and becomes well known for her fast running. The series focuses mainly on her adventures with the Argonauts whom she accompanies as a means of later joining the Amazons. The series also features Jason, Hercules, and other heroes and gods and goddesses of Greek mythology, though the emphasis is mainly on humour.^[2]

Atalanta is currently one of the featured characters in the comic *Hercules: the Thracian Wars* from Radical comics. In this version she is a lesbian and seeks death after being defeated by Hippomenes and the three "golden apples" in the legendary foot race and then deflowered. She kills Hippomenes and joins up with Hercules hoping for an honorable death to be forgiven by Artemis. Other notables include the familiar Meleager, Autolycus, and Iolcaus.

In Peter David's run on *The Incredible Hulk* in the 1990s, there was a character named Atalanta who was a member of a group called The Pantheon. She and other members of this group were descendants of an immortal youth named Agamemnon and were named after characters in Greek mythology. This Atalanta was a brash, confident warrior-woman. Like the majority of her fellow Pantheon teammates, she had somewhat enhanced strength and agility. Her weapon was a bow that could shoot energy projectiles. She was the unwilling object of affection to a Trojan (an alien race whose people have no noses) prince named Trauma.

References

[1] the cartoon on youtube (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-77_cVnmUQ)

[2] Atalante (<http://www.bedetheque.com/serie-458-BD-Atalante.html>)

External links

- Apollodorus, Bibliotheca 3. 9. 2 for Atalanta and 1.8.3 for the Boar Hunt
- Rubens's "Atalanta and Meleager" (<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/picture-of-month/displaypicture.asp?venue=2&id=6>) in the Lady Lever Art Gallery (<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ladylever/>)
- <http://www.theoi.com/heroines/atalanta>
- Reference to Kindled the Brand in Meleager's death (<http://www.maicar.com/GML/Atalanta.html>)

Autolycus

In Greek mythology, **Autolycus** (in Greek, Αὐτόλυκος, *Autolykos*, "The Wolf Itself") was a son of Hermes and Chione. He was the husband of Neaera,^[1] or according to Homer,^[2] of Amphithea. Autolycus fathered Anticlea (who married Laertes of Ithaca and was the mother of Odysseus) and several sons, of whom only Aesimus is named.

Life and major events

Autolycus was born the son of Hermes and Chione^[3] or Philonis.^[4] He had a helmet to make him invisible. However Pausanias stated that his real father was Daedalion (Pausanias 8.4.7). Autolycus was conceived by Hermes touching the virgin Chione's face (Ovid 11. 301).

Autolycus was husband to Mestra, daughter of Erysichthon (Ovid 8. 738), or to Neaera (Pausanias 8. 4. 3), or to Amphithea (Homer, *Odyssey*, 19. 394). He became the father of Anticlea and Polymede, of whom the latter was the mother of Jason, the famous Argonaut who led a group of men to find the coveted Golden Fleece (Apollodorus 1.9.16). A different Autolycus, the son of Deimachus, was a part of the Argonauts who went on the journey to find the fleece.

Through Anticleia, Autolycus was also the grandfather of the famous warrior Odysseus (Homer 24.330), and he was responsible for the naming of the child as well. This happened when the nurse of the child Eurycleia "laid the child upon his knees and spoke, and addressed him: Autolycus, find now thyself a name to give to thy child's own child; be sure he has long been prayed for" (Homer 19.386-403).

Autolycus obtained most of the same skills that his supposed father Hermes possesses, such as the art of theft, trickery (Hyginus 201), and skill with the lyre and gracious song (Ovid 11. 301). It was said that he "loved to make white of black, and black of white, from a hornless animal to a horned one, or from horned one to a hornless" (Hyginus 201). He was given the gift that his thievery could not be caught by anyone (Hyginus 201).

He put his skills to the test when he stole the helmet of the great warrior and his grandson, Odysseus, "he had broken into the stout-built house of Amyntor, son of Ormenus; and he gave it to Amphidamas of Cythera to take to Scandeia, and Amphidamas gave it to Molus as a guest-gift, but he gave it to his own son Meriones to wear; and now, being set thereon, it covered the head of Odysseus" (Homer 10.254 I). Autolycus, master of thievery, was also well known for stealing Sisyphus' herd right from underneath him. Sisyphus, who was commonly known for being a crafty king that killed guests, seduced his niece and stole his brothers' throne (Hyginus 50-99) and was banished to the throes of Tartarus by the gods.

Herakles, the great Greek hero, was taught the art of wrestling by Autolycus (Apollodorus 2.4.9). However, Autolycus was a source of some controversy in Herakles' life, because Autolycus stole some cattle from Euboea and Eurytus, who accused Herakles of the deed and, upon his going mad about these accusations, Herakles killed them plus another one of Autolycus' sons, Iphitus. This led to Herakles serving three years of punishment for the deed to repent for this (Apollodorus 2.6.3).

Cultural references

Although not as well known as many other Greek mythological figures, Autolycus has appeared in a number of works of fiction.

- A comic thief in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* boasts that he is named after Autolycus and, like him, is "a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles".
- Autolycus appeared in Diana Wynne Jones' book *The Game* as a very mischievous brat.
- In the television series *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys* and *Xena: Warrior Princess*, Autolycus appeared as a comical antihero, portrayed by cult actor Bruce Campbell, who has a kinder heart than he lets on. As the self-proclaimed "King of Thieves", he was depicted as a thief of great cunning but even greater ego, which typically resulted in him getting in over his head in one scenario after another.
- Autolycus is also the name of a fictional racehorse in the 1934 film *The Clairvoyant*, starring Claude Rains.
- Autolycus is the name of Debbie Aldridge's horse in the BBC Radio 4 series 'The Archers'.
- Autolycus is the name of a midget submarine owned by the Lost Boys, the thieves of Philip Reeve's *Mortal Engines* series of books.
- Autolycus is the name of a pet Jackdaw belonging to the fictional detective Albert Campion in the novels by Margery Allingham.
- Autolycus appeared in an episode of the Canadian television series *Class of the Titans*, stealing Hercules's last surviving arrow for Cronus.
- The superhero/trickster figure of Uncle Sam in Robert Coover's *The Public Burning* (1977, New York, Grove Books) is described in the following terms (p. 7): "American Autolycus, they called him in the Gospels, referring to his cunning powers of conjuration, transmutation, and magical consumption (he can play the shell game, not with a mere pea, but with whole tin mines, forests, oil fields, mountain ranges, and just before Thanksgiving this past year made an entire island disappear!)".
- Autolycus the penname Aldous Huxley used when writing the 'Marginalia' column in the *Athenaeum*.^[5]
- In the game *Age of Empires Online*, an army of computer-controlled opponents, who call themselves the Followers of Autolycus, must be defeated during several quests.

Sources

- *Bibliotheca* I, ix, 16; II, iv, 9; vi, 2.
- Ovid. *Metamorphoses* XI, 301-17; Homer. *Iliad* X, 265-271.
- Homer. *Odyssey* XI, 84-6; XIX, 395-566.
- Hyginus, *Fabulae*
- Homer, *Odyssey*
- Ovid, *Metamorphoses*
- Pausanias, *Description of Greece*
- Aeschylus, *Fragments*
- *Bibliotheca*
- Homer, *Iliad*
- Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*

Chrysaor has no myth save that of his birth: from the severed neck of Medusa, who was with child by Poseidon, he and Pegasus both sprang at the moment of her death. "From this moment we hear no more of Chrysaor, the rest of the tale concerning the stallion only...[who visits the spring of Pirene] perhaps also for his brother's sake, by whom in the end he let himself be caught, the immortal horse by his mortal brother."^[6]

Bellerophon's brave journey began in the familiar way,^[7] with an exile: he had murdered either his brother, whose name is usually given as Deliades, or killed a shadowy "enemy", a "Belleros"^[8] (though the details are never directly told), and in expiation of his crime arrived as a suppliant to Proetus, king in Tiryns, one of the Mycenaean strongholds of the Argolid. Proetus, by virtue of his kingship, cleansed Bellerophon of his crime. The wife of the king, whether named Anteia^[9] or Stheneboea,^[10] took a fancy to him, but when he rejected her, she accused Bellerophon of attempting to ravish her.^[11] Proetus dared not satisfy his anger by killing a guest, so he sent Bellerophon to King Iobates his father-in-law, in the plain of the River Xanthus in Lycia, bearing a sealed message in a folded tablet: "Pray remove the bearer from this world: he attempted to violate my wife, your daughter."^[12] Before opening the tablets, Iobates feasted with Bellerophon for nine days. On reading the tablet's message Iobates too feared the wrath of the Erinyes if he murdered a guest; so he sent Bellerophon on a mission that he deemed impossible: to kill the fire-breathing monster the Chimera, living in neighboring Caria. The Chimera was a fire-breathing monster whose make-up comprised the body of a goat, the head of a lion and the tail being a serpent. This monster had terrorized the nearby countryside. Iobates sent Bellerophon on the quest to fight the Solymi, tribesmen bent on glory. Bellerophon defeated them but not easily.

He was then sent to battle the Amazons, fighting women, whom he again defeated in a tough battle most men would have lost.

Capturing Pegasus



Veroli casket panel detail showing Bellerophon with Pegasus, dating from 900-1000AD.

The Lycian seer Polyeidon told Bellerophon that he would have need of Pegasus. To obtain the services of the untamed winged horse, Polyeidon told Bellerophon to sleep in the temple of Athena. While Bellerophon slept, he dreamed that Athena set a golden bridle beside him, saying "Sleepest thou, prince of the house of Aiolos? Come, take this charm for the steed and show it to the Tamer thy father as thou makest sacrifice to him of a white bull."^[13] It was there when he awoke. Bellerophon had to approach Pegasus while it drank from a well; Polyeidon told him which well—the never-failing Pirene on the citadel of Corinth, the city of Bellerophon's birth. Other accounts say that Athena brought Pegasus already tamed and bridled, or that Poseidon the horse-tamer, secretly the father of Bellerophon, brought Pegasus, as Pausanias understood.^[14] Bellerophon mounted his steed and flew off to where the Chimera was said to dwell.



The eternal fires of Chimera in Lycia (modern-day Turkey) where the Chimera myth takes place.

The slaying of the Chimera

When he arrived in Lycia, the Chimera was truly ferocious, and he could not harm the monster even while riding on Pegasus. He felt the heat of the breath the Chimera expelled, and was struck with an idea. He got a large block of lead and mounted it on his spear. Then he flew head-on towards the Chimera, holding out the spear as far as he could. Before he broke off his attack, he managed to lodge the block of lead inside the Chimera's throat. The beast's fire-breath melted the lead, and blocked its air passage.^[15] The Chimera suffocated, and Bellerophon returned victorious to King Iobates.^[16] Iobates, on Bellerophon's return, was unwilling to credit his story. A series of daunting further quests ensued: he was sent against the warlike Solymi and then against the Amazons who fought like men, whom Bellerophon vanquished by dropping boulders from his winged horse; when he was sent against a Carian pirate, Cheirmarrhus, an ambush failed, when Bellerophon killed all sent to assassinate him; the palace guards were sent against him, but Bellerophon called upon Poseidon, who flooded the plain of



Bellerophon riding Pegasus (1914)

Xanthus behind Bellerophon as he approached. In defense the palace women sent him and the flood in retreat by rushing from the gates with their robes lifted high, offering themselves, to which the modest hero replied by withdrawing.^[17] Iobates relented, produced the letter, and allowed Bellerophon to marry his daughter Philonoe, the younger sister of Anteia, and shared with him half his kingdom,^[18] with fine vineyards and grain fields. The lady Philonoe bore him Isander,^[19] Hippolochus and Laodamia, who lay with Zeus the Counselor and bore Sarpedon but was slain by Artemis.^{[20][21][22]} However, as Bellerophon's fame grew, so did his *hubris*. Bellerophon felt that because of his victory over the Chimera he deserved to fly to Mount Olympus, the realm of the gods. However, this presumption angered Zeus and he sent a gad-fly to sting the horse causing Bellerophon to fall all the way back to Earth. Pegasus completed the flight to Olympus where Zeus used him as a pack horse for his thunderbolts.^[23] On the Plain of Aleion ("Wandering"), Bellerophon (who had fallen into a thorn bush) lived out his life in misery as a blinded crippled hermit grieving and shunning the haunts of men until he died.^[24] In Tlos, near Fethiye, in modern day Turkey, ancient Lykia, there is a tomb with a carving of a man riding a winged horse. This is claimed locally to be the tomb of Bellerophon.

Euripides' *Bellerophontes*

Enough fragments of Euripides' lost tragedy *Bellerophontes* remain embedded as some thirty quotations in surviving texts to give scholars a basis for assessing its theme: the tragic outcome of his attempt to storm Olympus on Pegasus. An outspoken passage—in which Bellerophon seems to doubt the gods' existence from the contrast between the wicked and impious, who live lives of ease with the privations suffered by the good—is apparently the basis for Aristophanes' imputation of "atheism" to the tragic poet.^[25]

Perseus on Pegasus

The replacement of Bellerophon by the more familiar culture hero Perseus was a development of Classical times that was standardized during the Middle Ages and has been adopted by the European poets of the Renaissance and later.^[26]

In popular culture

- The first planet discovered orbiting a Sun-like star, 51 Pegasi b, has been unofficially nicknamed 'Bellerophon'.^[27]
- *Chimera*, the 1972 National Book Award-winning novel by John Barth, includes a novella called *Bellerophoniad* that is a complex postmodern retelling and examination of the myth of Bellerophon.
- In *The Concept of Anxiety*, Søren Kierkegaard wrote that Bellerophon "*sat calmly on his Pegasus in the service of the idea but fell when he wanted to misuse Pegasus by riding the horse to a rendezvous with a mortal woman.*"^[28]
- The classical opera seria *Il Bellerofonte* of the Czech composer Josef Mysliveček, premiered in Naples, 1767; its libretto by Giuseppe Bononcini focused on the passion of the queen Antea.
- *Bellerophon* is a computer program used by geneticists and molecular biologists to detect invalid "chimera" genetic sequences.
- *Bellerophon* was also the name of four or more Royal Navy warships, the first of which fought many naval battles against Napoleon. HMS *Bellerophon*'s keel was laid down in 1782, she was launched in 1792 and broken up in 1836. Napoleon surrendered and was taken aboard the *Bellerophon* after his defeat at Waterloo. Known as "Billy Ruffian" by the crew, the 74 gun warship fought at the Battle of the Nile (1798) and Battle of Trafalgar (1805). The second HMS *Bellerophon* was an early battleship, renamed *Indus III* in 1904 and used for training, then sold in 1922. The third HMS *Bellerophon* was the lead ship of a three-ship class, which were a follow up to HMS *Dreadnought*; she fought at the Battle of Jutland. For other ships of the same name, see HMS *Bellerophon*.
- The USS *Bellerophon* (ARL-31) was one of 41 *Achelous*-class landing craft repair ships built for the United States Navy during World War II. She was the only U.S. Naval vessel to bear the name.
- A large statue of Bellerophon taming Pegasus graces the facade of the Columbia Law School in Manhattan.
- Bellerophon astride Pegasus, as the first airborne warrior, is the traditional symbol of British Airborne forces.
- 'Bellerophon' is the name of a spacecraft in each of: the 1956 movie, *Forbidden Planet*; the TV series *Andromeda*; and the series *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. 'Bellerophon' was also the name of a character on the series *Xena: Warrior Princess* and the name of a planet in the series *Firefly*.
- 'Bellerophon' is used as a name for a cure to the fictional virus 'Chimera' in *Mission Impossible II*.



The British Airborne Units' coat of arms depicts Pegasus as a winged unicorn.



A statue of Bellerophon taming Pegasus outside Columbia Law School

References

- [1] Kerenyi 1959, p 75.
- [2] *Iliad* vi.155–203.
- [3] Kirk 1990, p 178
- [4] *ibid.*
- [5] Kerenyi 1959 p 78 suggests that "sea-green" Glaucus is a double for Poseidon, god of the sea, who looms behind many of the elements in Bellerophon's myth, not least as the sire of Pegasus and of Chrysaor, but also as the protector of Bellerophon.
- [6] Kerenyi 1959 p 80.
- [7] See Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, chapter 1, "Separation".
- [8] The suggestion, made by Kerenyi and others, makes the name "Bellerophontes" the "killer of Belleros", just as Hermes Argeiphontes is "Hermes the killer of Argus". Carpenter, Rhys (1950). "Argeiphontes: A Suggestion". *American Journal of Archaeology* **54** (3): 177–183. JSTOR 500295., makes a carefully argued case for *Bellerophontes* as the "bane-slayer" of the "bane to mankind" in *Iliad* II.329, derived from a rare Greek word ἔλλερον, explained by the grammarians as κακόν, "evil". This ἔλλερον is connected by Katz, J. (1998). "How to be a Dragon in Indo-European: Hittite illuyankas and its Linguistic and Cultural Congeners in Latin, Greek, and Germanic". In Jasanoff; Melchert; Oliver. *Mfr Curad. Studies in Honor of Calvert Watkins*. Innsbruck. pp. 317–334. ISBN 3851246675. with a Hesychius gloss ελνεξ "water animal", and an Indo-European word for "snake", OR "dragon", cognate to English *eel*, also found in Hittite *Illuyanka*, which would make Bellerophon the dragon slayer of Indo-European myth, represented by Indra slaying Vrtra in Indo-Aryan, and by Thor slaying the Midgard Serpent in Germanic. Robert Graves in *The Greek Myths* rev. ed. 1960 suggested a translation "bearing darts".
- [9] In *Iliad* vi.
- [10] Euripides' tragedies *Stheneboia* and *Bellerophontes* are lost.
- [11] This mytheme is most familiar in the narrative of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. Robert Graves also notes the parallel in the Egyptian *Tale of Two Brothers* and in the desire of Athamas' wife for Phrixus (Graves 1960, 70.2, 75.1).
- [12] The tablets "on which he had traced a number of devices with a deadly meaning" constitute the only apparent reference to writing in the *Iliad*. Such a letter is termed a "bellerophontic" letter; one such figures in a subplot of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, bringing offstage death to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Such a letter figures in the earlier story of Sargon of Akkad.
- [13] Kerenyi 1959, quoting Apollodorus Mythographus, 2.7.4.
- [14] *Description of Greece* 1.4.6.
- [15] Some of the red-figure pottery painters show Bellerophon wielding Poseidon's trident instead (Kerenyi 1959).
- [16] Hesiod, *Theogony* 319ff; *Bibliothèque*, ii.3.2; Pindar, *Olympian Odes*, xiii.63ff; Pausanias, ii.4.1; Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 157; John Tzetzes, *On Lycophron*.
- [17] Robert Graves, 75.d; Plutarch, *On the Virtues of Women*.
- [18] The inheritance of kingship through the king's daughter, with many heroic instances, was discussed by Finkelberg, Margalit (1991). "Royal succession in heroic Greece". *The Classical Quarterly*. New Series **41** (2): 303–316. JSTOR 638900.; compare Orion and Merope.
- [19] Isander was struck down by Ares in battle with the Solymi (*Iliad* xvi).
- [20] Homer, *Iliad*, 6. 197–205
- [21] Oxford Classical Mythology Online. "Chapter 25: Myths of Local Heroes and Heroines" (<http://www.us.oup.com/us/companion.websites/0195153448/studentresources/chapters/ch25/?view=usa>). *Classical Mythology, Seventh Edition*. Oxford University Press USA. . Retrieved April 26, 2010.
- [22] Diodorus Siculus, refers to her as Deidamia and makes her wife of Evander, son of Sarpedon the elder and by her father of Sarpedon the younger. *Library of History*, 5. 79. 3
- [23] Parallels are in the myths of Icarus and Phaeton.
- [24] Pindar, *Olympian Odes*, xiii.87–90, and *Isthmian Odes*, vii.44; *Bibliothèque* ii.3.2; Homer, *Iliad* vi.155–203 and xvi.328; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* ix.646.
- [25] Riedweg, Christoph (1990). "The 'atheistic' fragment from Euripides' *Bellerophontes* (286 N²)". *Illinois Classical Studies* **15** (1): 39–53. ISSN 0363-1923.
- [26] Johnston, George Burke (1955). "Jonson's 'Perseus upon Pegasus'". *The Review of English Studies*. New Series **6** (21): 65–67. doi:10.1093/res/VI.21.65.
- [27] "Stars with Exoplanets" (<http://jumk.de/astronomie/exoplanets/51-pegasi.shtml>). 2010-11-11. .
- [28] *The Concept of Anxiety*. Princeton University Press. 1980. p. 150. ISBN 0-691-02011-6.

Further reading

- Graves, Robert, 1960. *The Greek Myths*, revised edition (Harmondsworth: Penguin)
- Homer, *Iliad*, book vi.155–203
- Kerenyi, Karl, 1959. *The Heroes of the Greeks* (London: Thames and Hudson)
- Kirk, G.S., 1990. *The Iliad: A Commentary Volume II: books 5-8*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Boreads

For the genus of noctuid moths, see Zethes (moth).

For the social fraternity nicknamed "Zetes", see Zeta Psi

The **Boreads**, in Greek mythology, were **Calaïs** (Κάλαϊς) and **Zetes** (also **Zethes**) (Ζήτης). They were the sons of Boreas and Oreithyia, daughter of King Erechtheus of Athens. Due to being sons of the north wind they were supernaturally gifted in different ways (depending on changes in the story from being passed down through generations and cultures) either being as fast as the wind or able to fly, having wings either on their feet or backs, depending on the myth.

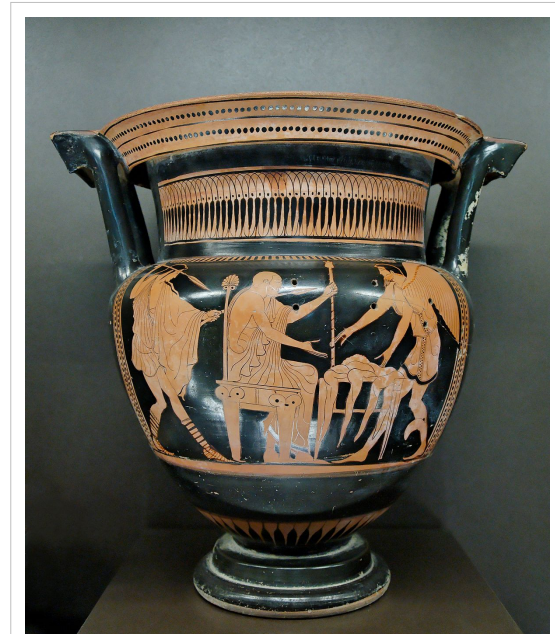
They were Argonauts and played a particularly vital role in the rescue of Phineus from the harpies. They succeeded in driving the monsters away but did not kill them, at a request from the goddess of the rainbow, Iris, who promised that Phineas would not be bothered by the harpies again. As thanks, Phineas told the Argonauts how to pass the Symplegades. It is said that the Boreads were turned back by Iris at the Strophades. The islands' name, meaning "Islands of Turning", refers to this event.

Their death was said to be caused by Heracles on Tenos in revenge for when they convinced the Argonauts to leave him behind as he searched for Hylas.

Other sources imply that the sons of Boreas died chasing the harpies, as it was fated that they would perish if they failed to catch those they pursued. In some versions, the harpies drop into the sea from exhaustion, and so their pursuers fall as well.

Sources

- Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* I, 211-223.
- Apollodorus, *Bibliothèque* I, ix, 21; III, xv, 2.



The Boreads rescuing Phineus from the Harpies, column-krater by the Leningrad Painter, ca. 460 BC, Louvre

Cadmus

Cadmus or **Kadmos** (Ancient Greek: Κάδμος), in Greek mythology was a Phoenician prince,^[1] the son of king Agenor and queen Telephassa of Tyre and the brother of Phoenix, Cilix and Europa. He was originally sent by his royal parents to seek out and escort his sister Europa back to Tyre after she was abducted from the shores of Phoenicia by Zeus.^[2] Cadmus founded the Greek city of Thebes, the acropolis of which was originally named *Cadmeia* in his honor.

Cadmus was credited by the ancient Greeks (Herodotus^[3] is an example) with introducing the original Alphabet or Phoenician alphabet -- *phoinikeia grammata*, "Phoenician letters" -- to the Greeks, who adapted it to form their Greek alphabet. Herodotus estimates that Cadmus lived sixteen hundred years before his time, or around 2000 BC.^[4] Herodotus had seen and described the Cadmean writing in the temple of Apollo at Thebes engraved on certain tripods. He estimated those tripods to date back to the time of Laius the great-grandson of Cadmus.^[5] On one of the tripods there was this inscription in Cadmean writing, which as he attested, resembled Ionian letters: Ἀμφιτρύων μ' ἀνέθηκεν ἐνάρων ἀπὸ Τηλεβοάων (*"Amphitryon dedicated me [don't forget] the spoils of [the battle of] Teleboae."*).

Though later Greeks like Herodotus dated Cadmus's role in the founding myth of Thebes to well before the Trojan War (or, in modern terms, during the Aegean Bronze Age), this chronology conflicts with most of what is now known or thought to be known about the origins and spread of both the Phoenician and Greek alphabets. While a Phoenician origin for the Greek alphabet is certain, the earliest Greek inscriptions match Phoenician letter forms from the late 9th or 8th centuries BC -- and, in any case, the Phoenician alphabet properly speaking wasn't developed until around 1050 BC (or after the Bronze Age collapse). The Homeric picture of the Mycenaean age betrays extremely little awareness of writing, possibly reflecting the loss during the Dark Age of the earlier Linear B script. Indeed the only Homeric reference to writing^[6] was in the phrase "γράμματα λυγρά", *grámmata lygrá*, literally "uneducated", when referring to the Bellerophontic letter. (According to Walter Burkert in *The Orientalizing Revolution*, literacy explodes within a few decades after 750 BC: "The earliest Greek letters recognized to date originate in Naxos, Ischia, Athens, and Euboea, and appear around or a little before 750".^[7]) Linear B tablets have been found in abundance at Thebes, which might lead one to speculate that the legend of Cadmus as bringer of the alphabet could reflect earlier traditions about the origins of Linear B writing in Greece (as Frederick Ahl speculated in 1967^[8]). But such a suggestion, however attractive, is by no means a certain conclusion in light of currently available evidence. The connection between the name of Cadmus and the historical origins of either the Linear B script or the later Phoenician alphabet, if any, remains elusive. However, in modern day Lebanon, Cadmus is still revered and celebrated as the 'carrier of the letter' to the world.

According to Greek myth, Cadmus's descendants ruled at Thebes on and off for several generations, including the time of the Trojan War.



Cadmus fighting the dragon. Painting from a krater in the Louvre Museum.

Etymology

Cadmus' name is of uncertain etymology.^[9] It has been connected to Semitic *qdm* "the east" and Greek *kekasmai* (<*kekadmai) "to shine". Robert Beekes rejects these derivations and considers it "pre-Greek".^[10]

Wanderings

Samothrace

After his sister Europa had been carried off by Zeus from the shores of Phoenicia, Cadmus was sent out by his father to find her, and enjoined not to return without her. Unsuccessful in his search - or unwilling to go against Zeus - he came to Samothrace, the island sacred to the "Great Gods"^[11] and the Kabeiroi, whose mysteries would be celebrated also at Thebes. Cadmus did not journey alone to Samothrace; he appeared with his "far-shining" mother Telephassa^[12] in the company of his brother, who gave his name to the island of Thasos nearby. An identically composed trio had other names at Samothrace, according to Diodorus Siculus:^[13] Elektra and her two sons, Dardanos and Eetion or Iasion. There was a fourth figure, Elektra's daughter, Harmonia,^[14] whom Cadmus took away as a bride, as Zeus had abducted Europa.^[15] The wedding was the first celebrated on Earth to which the gods brought gifts, according to Diodorus^[16] and dined with Cadmus and his bride.^[17]



Cadmus and the dragon, black-figure amphora from Euboea, ca. 560–50 BC, Louvre (E 707).

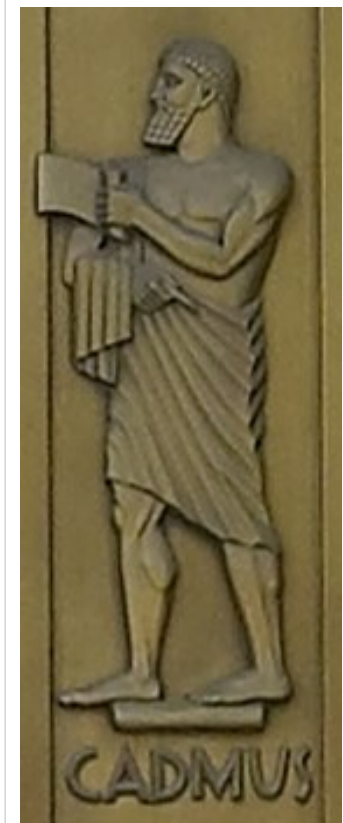
Founder of Thebes

Cadmus came in the course of his wanderings to Delphi, where he consulted the oracle. He was ordered to give up his quest and follow a special cow, with a half moon on her flank, which would meet him, and to build a town on the spot where she should lie down exhausted.

The cow was given to Cadmus by Pelagon, King of Phocis, and it guided him to Boeotia, where he founded the city of Thebes. Robert Graves (*The Greek Myths*) suggested that the cow was actually turned loose within a moderately confined space, and that where she lay down, a

temple to the moon-goddess (Selene) was erected: "A cow's strategic and commercial sensibilities are not well developed," Graves remarked.

Intending to sacrifice the cow to Athena, Cadmus sent some of his companions to the nearby Castalian Spring, for water. They were slain by the spring's guardian water-dragon (compare the Lernaean Hydra), which was in turn destroyed by Cadmus, the duty of a culture hero of the new order.



Lee Lawrie, *Cadmus* (1939). Library of Congress John Adams Building, Washington, D.C.



Cadmus Sowing the Dragon's teeth, by Maxfield Parrish, 1908.

By the instructions of Athena, he sowed the dragon's teeth in the ground, from which there sprang a race of fierce armed men, called the *Spartoi* ("sown"). By throwing a stone among them, Cadmus caused them to fall upon one another until only five survived, who assisted him to build the Cadmeia or citadel of Thebes, and became the founders of the noblest families of that city.

The dragon had been sacred to Ares, so the god made Cadmus do penance for eight years by serving him. According to Theban tellings, it was at the expiration of this period that the gods gave him Harmonia ("harmony", literally "well put together", or "well assembled") as wife. At Thebes, Cadmus and Harmonia began a dynasty with a son Polydorus, and four daughters, Agave, Autonoë, Ino and Semele.

At the wedding, whether celebrated at Samothrace or at Thebes, all the gods were present; Harmonia received as bridal gifts a *peplos* worked by Athena and a necklace made by Hephaestus. This necklace, commonly referred to as the Necklace of Harmonia, brought misfortune to all who possessed it. Notwithstanding the

divinely ordained nature of his marriage and his kingdom, Cadmus lived to regret both: his family was overtaken by grievous misfortunes, and his city by civil unrest. Cadmus finally abdicated in favor of his grandson Pentheus, and went with Harmonia to Illyria, to fight on the side^[18] of the Encheleans^[19] Later, as king, he founded the city of Lychnidos and Bouthoe.^[20]

Nevertheless, Cadmus was deeply troubled by the ill-fortune which clung to him as a result of his having killed the sacred dragon, and one day he remarked that if the gods were so enamoured of the life of a serpent, he might as well wish that life for himself. Immediately he began to grow scales and change in form. Harmonia, seeing the transformation, thereupon begged the gods to share her husband's fate, which they granted (Hyginus).

In another telling of the story, the bodies of Cadmus and his wife were changed after their deaths; the serpents watched their tomb while their souls were translated to the fields. In Euripides' *The Bacchae*, Cadmus is given a prophecy by Dionysus whereby both he and his wife will be turned into snakes for a period before eventually being brought to live among the blest.

Native Boeotian hero

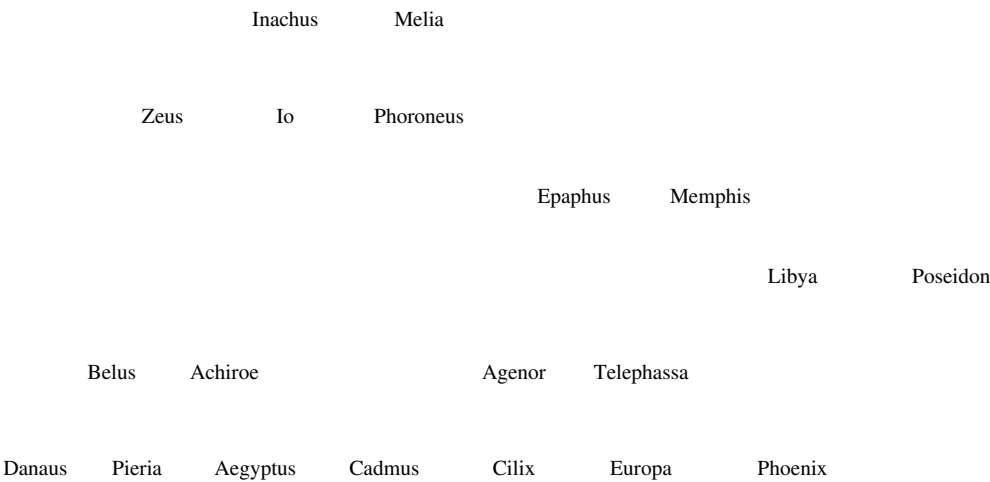
In Phoenician, as well as Hebrew, the Semitic root *qdm* signifies "the east", the Levantine origin of "Kdm" himself, according to the Greek mythographers; the equation of *Kadmos* with the Semitic *qdm* was traced to a publication of 1646 by R. B. Edwards.^[21] The name *Kadmos* has been thoroughly Hellenised. The fact that Hermes was worshipped in Samothrace under the name of Cadmus or Cadmilus seems to show that the Theban Cadmus was interpreted as an ancestral Theban hero corresponding to the Samothracian. Another Samothracian connection for Cadmus is offered via his wife Harmonia, who is said by Diodorus Siculus to be daughter of Zeus and Electra and of Samothracian birth.^[22]

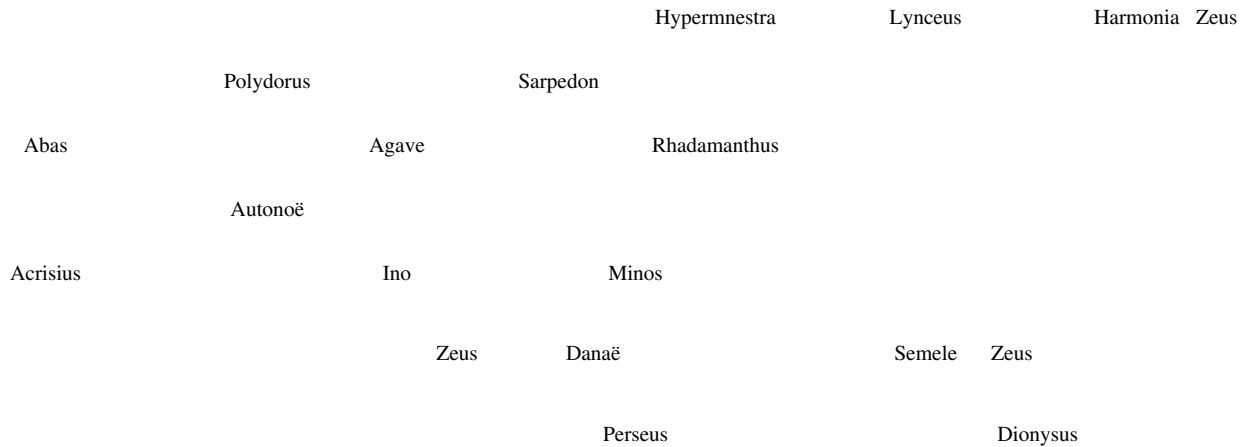
Some modern scholars argue that Cadmus was originally an autochthonous Boeotian hero and that only in later times, did the story of a Phoenician adventurer of that name become current, to whom was ascribed the introduction of the alphabet, the invention of agriculture and working in bronze and of civilization generally.^{[23][24]} The "Wedding of Cadmus and Harmonia" is considered as a conceptual symbolic coupling of Eastern (Phoenician) learning with Western (Greek) love of beauty.

Genealogy

Cadmus was of ultimately divine ancestry, the grandson of the sea god Poseidon and Libya on his father's side, and of Nilus (the River Nile) on his mother's side; overall he was considered a member of the fifth generation of beings following the (mythological) creation of the world:

Argive genealogy in Greek mythology





Offspring

With Harmonia, he was the father of Ino, Polydorus, Autonoe, Agave and Semele. Their youngest son was Illyrius.^[25]

Citations

- [1] Alden, John B. (1883) *The Greek Anthology*, pp. 160-162.
- [2] A modern application of genealogy would make him the paternal grandfather of Dionysus, through his daughter by Harmonia, Semele. Plutarch once admitted that he would rather be assisted by Lamprias, his own grandfather, than by Dionysus' grandfather, i.e. Cadmus. (*Symposiacs*, Book IX, question II (<http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/p/plutarch/symposiacs/chapter9.html#section91>))
- [3] Herodotus, *Histories*, Book V, 58 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hdt.+5.58&fromdoc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0126>).
- [4] Herodotus. *Histories*, Book II, 2.145.4 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0126;book=2;chapter=145;section=4>).
- [5] Herodotus. *Histories*, Book V.59.1 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hdt.+5.59.1&fromdoc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0126>).
- [6] There are several examples of written letters, such as in Nestor's narrative concerning Bellerophon and the "Bellerophontic letter", another description of a letter presumably sent to Palamedes from Priam but in fact written by Odysseus (Hyginus. *Fabulae*, 105 (<http://www.theoi.com/Text/HyginusFabulae3.html#105>)), as well as the letters described by Plutarch in Parallel Lives, Theseus, which were presented to Ariadne presumably sent from Theseus. Plutarch goes on to describe how Theseus erected a pillar on the Isthmus of Corinth, which bears an inscription of two lines.
- [7] Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution* 1993:26, noting the inscribed Dipylon jug at Athens, the Ischia inscription on the "cup of Nestor", a geometric period shard from Naxos and some Euboean material.
- [8] F.M. Ahl. "Cadmus and the Palm-Leaf Tablets." *American Journal of Philology* 88.2, Apr. 1967, pp. 188-94.
- [9] LSJ entry Κάδμος (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0057;entry=*ka/dmos)
- [10] Robert Beekes - Greek Etymological Dictionary (<http://www.ieed.nl/cgi-bin/response.cgi?root=leiden&morpho=0&basename=\data\ie\greek&first=6611>)
- [11] The *Megaloi theoi* of the Mysteries of Samothrace.
- [12] Or known by another lunar name, Argiope, "she of the white face" (Kerenyi 1959:27).
- [13] Diodorus Siculus, 5.48; Clement of Alexandria, to wit *Proreptikos* 2.13.3.
- [14] Harmonia at Thebes was accounted the daughter of Ares and Aphrodite; all these figures appeared in sculptures on the pediment of the Hellenistic main temple in the Sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace, the *Hieron*; the ancient sources on this family grouping were assembled by N. Lewis, *Samothrace. I: The Ancient Literary Sources* (New York) 1958:24-36.
- [15] Kerenyi (1959) notes that Cadmus in some sense found another Europa at Samothrace, according to an obscure scholium on Euripides' *Rhesus* 29.
- [16] Diodorus, 5.49.1; when the gods attended the later wedding of Peleus and Thetis, the harmony was shattered by the Apple of Discord.
- [17] The full range of references in Antiquity to this wedding is presented by Matia Rocchi, *Kadmos e Harmonia: un matrimonio problematico* (Rome: Bretschneider) 1989.
- [18] Apollodorus. *Library and Epitome*, 3.5.4.
- [19] Pierre Grimal, Pierre, Maxwell-Hyslop, A. R. *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*. Blackwell, 1996, ISBN 0-631-20102-5, p. 83.
- [20] Wilkes, J. J. *The Illyrians*. Blackwell Publishing, 1992, ISBN 0-631-19807-5, p. 99.

- [21] Edwards, *Kadmos the Phoenician: A Study in Greek Legends and the Mycenaean Age* (Amsterdam 1979), noted by Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Bronze Age* (Harvard University Press) 1992:2, and note), who remarks that the complementary connection of *Europa* with *rb*, "West" was an ancient one, made by Hesychius.
- [22] Diodorus Siculus 5.48.2
- [23] "There is little doubt that Cadmus was originally a Boeotian, that is, a Greek hero." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1911, s.v. "Cadmus"; Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution* ("Introduction") was written in part to lay such notions to rest.
- [24] The argument that nothing in the geography of Boeotia supports an Eastern influence was expressed, before the days of archaeology, by Gomme, A. W. (1913), "The Legend of Cadmus and the Logographi", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 33: 53–72, 223–245, doi:10.2307/624086; Gomme finds the literary evidence for Cadmus' Phoenician origin first directly expressed by Pherecydes, Herodotus and in a scholium on Hellanicus, where in each case it is already assumed as well known.
- [25] Pierre Grimal, Pierre, Maxwell-Hyslop, A. R. *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*. Blackwell, 1996, ISBN 0-631-20102-5, p. 83, 230.

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Castor and Pollux

In Greek and Roman mythology, **Castor**^[1] and **Pollux**^[2] or **Polydeuces**^[3] were twin brothers, together known as the **Dioscuri**.^[4] Their mother was Leda, but Castor was the mortal son of Tyndareus, king of Sparta, and Pollux the divine son of Zeus, who visited Leda in the guise of a swan. Though accounts of their birth are varied, they are sometimes said to have been born from an egg, along with their twin sisters Helen of Troy and Clytemnestra.

In Latin the twins are also known as the **Gemini**^[5] or **Castores**.^[6] When Castor was killed, Pollux asked Zeus to let him share his own immortality with his twin to keep them together, and they were transformed into the constellation Gemini. The pair was regarded as the patrons of sailors, to whom they appeared as St. Elmo's fire, and were also associated with horsemanship.

They are sometimes called the **Tyndaridae** or **Tyndarids**,^[7] later seen as a reference to their father and stepfather Tyndareus.

Birth and functions

The best-known story of the twins' birth is that Zeus disguised himself as a swan and raped Leda. Thus Leda's children are frequently said to have hatched from two eggs that she then produced. The Dioscuri can be recognized in vase-paintings by the skull-cap they wear, the *pilos*, which was explained in antiquity as the remnants of the egg from which they hatched.^[8] Tyndareus, Leda's mortal husband, is then father or foster-father to the children.^[9] Whether the children are thus mortal and which half-immortal is not consistent among accounts, nor is whether the twins hatched together from one egg. In some accounts, only Polydeuces was fathered by Zeus, while Leda and her husband Tyndareus conceived Castor. This explains why they were granted an alternate immortality. It is a common belief that one would live among the gods, while the other was among the dead. The figure of Tyndareus may have entered their tradition to explain their archaic name *Tindaridai* in Spartan inscriptions or in literature *Tyndaridai*,^[10] in turn occasioning incompatible accounts of their parentage.

Castor and Polydeuces are sometimes both mortal, sometimes both divine. One consistent point is that if only one of them is immortal, it is



Pair of Roman statuettes (3rd century AD) depicting the Dioscuri as horsemen, with their characteristic skullcaps (*Metropolitan Museum of Art*)



Castor depicted on a calyx krater of ca. 460–450 BC, holding a horse's reins and spears and wearing a pilos-style helmet

Polydeuces. In Homer's *Iliad*, Helen looks down from the walls of Troy and wonders why she does not see her brothers among the Achaeans. The narrator remarks that they are both already dead and buried back in their

homeland of Lacedaemon, thus suggesting that at least in some early traditions, both were mortal. Their death and shared immortality offered by Zeus was material of the lost *Cypria* in the Epic cycle.

The Dioscuri were regarded as helpers of mankind and held to be patrons of travellers and of sailors in particular, who invoked them to seek favourable winds.^[11] Their role as horsemen and boxers also led to them being regarded as the patrons of athletes and athletic contests.^[12] They characteristically intervened at the moment of crisis, aiding those who honoured or trusted them.^[13]

Classical sources

Ancient Greek authors tell a number of versions of the story of Castor and Pollux. Homer portrays them initially as ordinary mortals, treating them as dead in the *Iliad*, but in the *Odyssey* they are treated as alive even though "the corn-bearing earth holds them." The author describes them as "having honour equal to gods," living on alternate days due to the intervention of Zeus. In both the *Odyssey* and in Hesiod, they are described as the sons of Tyndareus and Leda. In Pindar, Pollux is the son of Zeus while Castor is the son of the mortal Tyndareus. The theme of ambiguous parentage is not unique to Castor and Pollux; similar characterisations appear in the stories of Hercules and Theseus.^[14] The Dioscuri are also invoked in Alcaeus' Fragment 34a^[15], though whether this poem antedates the Homeric Hymn to the twins^[16] is unknown.^[17] They appear together in two plays by Euripides, *Helen* and *Elektra*.

Cicero tells the story of how Simonides of Ceos was rebuked by Scopas, his patron, for devoting too much space to praising Castor and Pollux in an ode celebrating Scopas' victory in a chariot race. Shortly afterwards, Simonides was told that two young men wished to speak to him; after he had left the banquet room, the roof fell in and crushed Scopas and his guests.^[13]

Adventures

Both Dioscuri were excellent horsemen and hunters who participated in the hunting of the Calydonian Boar and later joined the crew of Jason's ship, the *Argo*.

As Argonauts

During the expedition of the Argonauts, Pollux took part in a boxing contest and defeated King Amycus of the Bebryces, a savage mythical people in Bithynia. After returning from the voyage, the Dioskouroi helped Jason and Peleus to destroy the city of Iolcus in revenge for the treachery of its king Pelias.

Rescuing Helen

When their sister Helen was abducted by the legendary Greek king Theseus, they invaded his kingdom of Attica to rescue her, abducting Theseus' mother Aethra in revenge and carrying her off to Sparta while setting a rival, Menestheus, on the throne of Athens. Aethra was forced to become Helen's slave but was eventually returned to her home by her grandsons Demophon and Acamas following the fall of Troy.

The Leucippides, Lynceus and death





Roman sarcophagus (160 AD) depicting the rape of the Leucippides, Phoebe and Hilaeira (*Vatican Museum*)

Castor and Pollux aspired to marry the Leucippides ("daughters of the white horse"), Phoebe and Hilaeira, whose father was a brother of Leucippus ("white horse").^[18] Although both women were already betrothed to cousins of the Dioscuri, the twin brothers Lynceus and Idas of Thebes, sons of Tyndareus's brother Aphareus. Castor and Pollux carried the women off to Sparta, where Phoebe bore Mnesileos to Pollux and Hilaeira bore Anogon to Castor. This began a feud among the four cousins.



Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus by Rubens,
ca. 1618

The cousins carried out a cattle-raid in Arcadia together but fell out over the division of the meat. After stealing the herd, but before dividing it, the cousins butchered, quartered, and roasted a calf.^[19] As they prepared to eat, the gigantic Idas suggested that the herd be divided into two parts instead of four, based on which pair of cousins finished their meal first.^[19] Castor and Pollux agreed.^[19] Idas quickly ate both his portion and Lynceus' portion.^[19] Castor and Pollux had been duped. They allowed their cousins to take the entire herd, but vowed to someday take revenge.^[19]

Some time later, Idas and Lynceus visited their uncle's home in Sparta.^[19] The uncle was on his way to Crete, so he left Helen in charge of entertaining the guests, which included both sets of cousins, as well as Paris, prince of Troy.^[19] Castor and Pollux recognized the opportunity to exact revenge, made an excuse that justified leaving the feast, and set out to steal their cousins' herd.^[19] Idas and Lynceus

eventually set out for home, leaving Helen alone with Paris, who then kidnapped Helen.^[19] Thus, the four cousins helped set into motion the events that gave rise to the Trojan War.

Meanwhile, Castor and Pollux had reached their destination. Castor climbed a tree to keep a watch as Pollux began to free the cattle. Far away, Idas and Lynceus approached. Lynceus, named for the lynx because he could see in the dark, spied Castor hiding in the tree.^[19] Idas and Lynceus immediately understood what was happening. Idas, furious, ambushed Castor, fatally wounding him with a blow from his spear—but not before Castor called out to warn Pollux.^[19] In the ensuing brawl, Pollux killed Lynceus. As Idas was about to kill Pollux, Zeus, who had been watching from Mt. Olympus, hurled a thunderbolt, killing Idas and saving his son.^[19]

Returning to the dying Castor, Pollux was given the choice by Zeus of spending all his time on Mount Olympus or giving half his immortality to his mortal brother. He opted for the latter (so giving half his immortality to Castor), enabling the twins to alternate between Olympus and Hades.^{[20][21]} The brothers became the two brightest stars in the constellation Gemini ("the twins"): Castor (Alpha Geminorum) and Pollux (Beta Geminorum). As emblems of immortality and death, the Dioscuri, like Heracles, were said to have been initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries.^[22]

Iconography

Castor and Pollux are consistently associated with horses in art and literature. They are widely depicted as helmeted horsemen carrying spears.^[20] The Pseudo-Oppian manuscript depicts the brothers hunting, both on horseback and on foot.^[23]

On votive reliefs they are depicted with a variety of symbols representing the concept of twinhood, such as the *dokana* (δόκανα – two upright piece of wood connected by two cross-beams), a pair of amphorae, a pair of shields, or a pair of snakes. They are also often shown wearing felt caps, above which stars may be depicted. They are depicted on metopes from Delphi showing them on the voyage of the *Argo* (Ἀργώ) and rustling cattle with Idas. Greek vases regularly show them in the rape of the Leucippides, as Argonauts, in religious ceremonies and at the delivery to Leda of the egg containing Helen.^[14]

They can be recognized in some vase-paintings by the skull-cap they wear, the *pilos* (πίλος), which was already explained in antiquity as the remnants of the egg from which they hatched.^[24]



Coin of Antiochus VII with Dioscuri

Shrines and rites



Fragmentary remains of the Temple of Castor and Pollux in Rome.

The Dioskouroi were worshipped by the Greeks and Romans alike; there were temples to the twins in Athens and Rome as well as shrines in many other locations in the ancient world.^[25]

The Dioscuri and their sisters having grown up in Sparta, in the royal household of Tyndareus, they were particularly important to the Spartans, who associated them with the Spartan tradition of dual kingship and appreciated that two princes of their ruling house were elevated to immortality. Their connection there was very ancient: a uniquely Spartan aniconic representation of the Tyndaridai was as two upright posts joined by a cross-bar;^{[26][27]} as the protectors of the Spartan army the "beam figure" or *dókana* was carried in front of the army on campaign.^[28] Sparta's unique dual kingship reflects the divine influence of the Dioscuri. When the Spartan army marched to war, one king remained behind at home, accompanied by one of the Twins. "In this way the real political order is secured in the realm of the Gods"^[29].

Their *herōon* or grave-shrine was on a mountain top at Therapne across the Eurotas from Sparta, at a shrine known as the *Meneláeion* where Helen, Melelaus, Castor and Pollux were all said to be buried. Castor himself was also venerated in the region of Kastoria in northern Greece.

They were commemorated both as gods on Olympus worthy of holocaust, and as deceased mortals in Hades, whose spirits had to be propitiated by libations. Lesser shrines to Castor, Pollux and Helen were also established at a number of other locations around Sparta.^[30] The pear tree was regarded by the Spartans as sacred to Castor and Pollux, and images of the twins were hung in its branches.^[31] The standard Spartan oath was to swear "by the two gods" (in Doric Greek: *νά τῶ θεῶν*, *ná tō theō*, in the Dual number).

The rite of *theoxenia* (θεοξενία), "god-entertaining", was particularly associated with Castor and Pollux. The two deities were summoned to a table laid with food, whether at individuals' own homes or in the public hearths or equivalent places controlled by states. They are sometimes shown arriving at a gallop over a food-laden table. Although such "table offerings" were a fairly common feature of Greek cult rituals, they were normally made in the shrines of the gods or heroes concerned. The domestic setting of the *theoxenia* was a characteristic distinction accorded to the Dioskouroi.^[14]

The image of the twins attending a goddess are widespread^[32] and link the Dioscuri with the male societies of initiates under the aegis of the Anatolian Great Goddess^[33] and the great gods of Samothrace. The Dioscuri are the inventors of war dances, which characterize the Kuretes.



Relief (2nd century BC) depicting the Dioscuri galloping above a winged Victory, with a banquet (*theoxenia*) laid out for them below

Indo-European analogues

The heavenly twins appear also in the Indo-European tradition as the effulgent Vedic brother-horsemen the Ashvins,^{[10][13]} the Lithuanian Ašvieniai, and the Germanic Alcis.^{[34][35]}

Italy and the Roman Empire

From the fifth century BC onwards, the brothers were revered by the Romans, probably as the result of cultural transmission via the Greek colonies of Magna Graecia in southern Italy. An archaic Latin inscription of the sixth or fifth century BC found at Lavinium, which reads *Castorei Podlouqueique qurois* ("To Castor and Pollux, the Dioskouroi"), suggests a direct transmission from the Greeks; the word "qurois" is virtually a transliteration of the Greek word *κούροις*, while "Podlouquei" is effectively a transliteration of the Greek *Πολυδεύκης*.^[36] The construction of the Temple of Castor and Pollux, located in the Roman Forum at the heart of their city, was undertaken to fulfil a vow (*votum*) made by Aulus Postumius Albus Regillensis in gratitude at the Roman victory in the Battle of Lake Regillus in 495 BC. The establishing of the temple may also be a form of *evocatio*, the transferral of a tutelary deity from a defeated town to Rome, where cult would be offered in exchange for favor.^[37] According to legend, the twins fought at the head of the Roman army and subsequently brought news of the victory back to Rome.^[20] The Locrians of Magna Graecia had attributed their success at a legendary battle on the banks of the Sagras to the intervention of the Twins. The Roman legend may in fact have had its origins in the Locrian account and possibly supplies further evidence of cultural transmission between Rome and Magna Graecia.^[38]

The Romans believed that the twins aided them on the battlefield.^[11] Their role as horsemen made them particularly attractive to the Roman *equites* and cavalry. Each year on July 15, the feast day of the Dioskouroi, the 1,800 equestrians would parade through the streets of Rome in an elaborate spectacle in which each rider wore full military attire and whatever decorations he had earned.^[39]

In the comedies of Plautus, women swear by Castor, and men by Pollux.

Etruscan Kastur and Pultuce



Etruscan inscription to the Dioscuri as "sons of Zeus" on the bottom of an Attic red-figure kylix (ca. 515–510 BC)

The Etruscans venerated the twins as *Kastur* and *Pultuce*, collectively the *tinās cliniaras*, "sons of Tinia," the Etruscan counterpart of Zeus. They were often portrayed on Etruscan mirrors.^[40] As was the fashion in Greece, they could also be portrayed symbolically; one example can be seen in the Tomba del Letto Funebre at Tarquinia where a *lectisternium* for them is painted. They are symbolised in the painting by the presence of two pointed caps crowned with laurel, referring to the Phrygian caps which they were often depicted as wearing.^[41]

Celtic Dioscuri

The 1st-century BC historian Diodorus Siculus records counterparts of the Dioscuri among the Atlantic Celts:

The Celts who dwell along the ocean venerate gods who resemble our Dioscuri above any of the gods, since they have a tradition handed down from ancient times that these gods came among them from the ocean. Moreover, there are on the ocean shore, they say, many names which are derived from the Argonauts and the Dioscuri.^[42]

Diodorus cites Timaeus (3rd century BC) as his source, so the passage is usually regarded as a description of an authentic Celtic tradition rather than an adoption from the Romans as a result of the conquest.^{[43][44]} The divine twins among the Celts would be analogous in the Indo-European tradition to the Vedic *Aśvins*, or to the Germanic twins^[45] mentioned by Tacitus.^[35] Their Celtic names are unknown; the conjecture *Divanno* and *Dinomogetimarus*, based on an inscription from Hérault naming a pair of young warrior gods (*Martes*),^{[46][43]} has not found wide support.^[35] The 19th-century Celticist Marie Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville equated Cernunnos with Castor and Smertullos with Pollux, and conjectured that Cúchulainn and Conall Cernach were later equivalents: "on the whole, the theory is more ingenious than convincing."^{[47][48]} The Pillar of the Boatmen depicts the twins among Celtic figures such as Cernunnos and Esus, as well as Roman deities such as Jupiter and Vulcan.^[49] The Dioscuri are widely portrayed in Gallo-Roman art, and references to them are more numerous in Gaul than in any other part of the Roman Empire.^[43]

Christianization

Even after the rise of Christianity, the Dioskouroi continued to be venerated. The fifth-century pope Gelasius I attested to the presence of a "cult of Castores" that the people did not want to abandon. In some instances, the twins appear to have simply been absorbed into a Christian framework; thus fourth-century AD pottery and carvings from North Africa depict the Dioskouroi alongside the Twelve Apostles, the Raising of Lazarus or with Saint Peter. The church took an ambivalent attitude, rejecting the immortality of the Dioskouroi but seeking to replace them with equivalent Christian pairs. Saints Peter and Paul were thus adopted in place of the Dioskouroi as patrons of travelers, and Saints Cosmas and Damian took over their function as healers. Some have also associated Saints Speusippus, Eleusippus, and Melapsippus with the Dioskouroi.^[23]



Zeus, Hera, and Amor observe the birth of Helen and the Dioscuri (*Dutch majolica, 1550*)

In culture

The twins are mentioned in the Holy Bible as being the logo for a shipping company that carried Paul to Rome: Acts 28:11 (KJV)—"And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was *Castor and Pollux*."

Castor et Pollux was the title of a 1737 opera by Jean-Philippe Rameau (libretto by Bernard), modified in 1754. The latter version became quite popular. The Italian composer Francesco Bianchi wrote another version called *Castore e Polluce*, first performed in 1779, and there was yet another opera by the same title by Georg Joseph Vogler in 1787.

In 1842 Lord Macaulay wrote a series of poems about Ancient Rome (the *Lays of Ancient Rome*). The second poem is about the Battle of Lake Regillus and describes the intervention of Castor and Pollux. They are referred to as the "Great Twin Brethren" in the poem.^[50]

Castor and Pollux (elephants) were killed and eaten during the 1870 Prussian siege of Paris.

There are at least four sets of twin summits named after Castor and Pollux. In Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, USA, the peaks are found close to the headwaters of the Lamar River in the Absaroka Range. Another pair is located in the Pennine Alps at the Swiss-Italian border. A third is in Glacier National Park of western Canada, within the Selkirk mountains. The fourth is in Mount Aspiring National Park of New Zealand, named by the explorer Charlie Douglas.

Castor and Pollux are characters that appear in a few of Robert A. Heinlein's books.

Castor Troy and Pollux Troy are villains (brothers) that appear in the 1997 film *Face/Off*.

Castor and Pollux are twin cameramen in the final book of Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* trilogy. Like in the myth, Castor was killed and Pollux survived.

Also, in the *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* fantasy series of novels series, Dionysus' twin sons are named Castor and Pollux. In the fourth book of the series Castor is killed in the battle, thus following the story of one passing and the other living.

The character Sollux Captor's name of Andrew Hussie's Homestuck was based on Castor and Pollux, mostly due to the fact that the two stars with the same name are in the constellation Gemini.

The band Cursive released an rock-opera album called "I Am Gemini" in 2012 about a set of twins called Cassius and Pollock.

In Persona 3 Pollux (Polydeuces) and Castor appear as the Personae of Akihiko Sanada and Shinjiro Aragaki respectively, who are good friends. Shinjiro is killed, following the myth.

Notes

- [1] /'kæstər/; Latin: *Castōr*, Greek: Κάστωρ *Kastōr* "beaver"
- [2] /'pɒləks/; Latin: *Pollūx*
- [3] /,pɒlɪˈdjuːsiːz/; Greek: Πολυδεύκης *Poludeukēs* "much sweet wine"
Bloomsbury (1996), "Dioscuri", *Dictionary of Myth*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing
- [4] /daɪˈɒskjərəɪ/; Latin: *Dioscūrī*, Greek: Διόσκουροι *Dioskouroi* "sons of Zeus"
- [5] /'dʒɛmɪnaɪ/; "twins"
- [6] /'kæstəriːz/
- [7] /tɪnˈdɛrɪdi/ or /'tɪndərɪdz/; Τυνδαρίδα, *Tundaridai*
- [8] Scholiast, *Lycophron*Kerenyi 1959, p. 107 note 584.
- [9] The familiar theme in Greek mythology of the mixed seed of a mortal and an immortal father is played out in various ways: compare Theseus.
- [10] Burkert 1985, p. 212
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- [25] Browning, WRF (1997), "Dioscuri", *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Oxford University Press.
- [26] Burkert 1985
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- [28] Sekunda, Nicholas 'Nick' Victor; Hook, Richard (1998), *The Spartan Army*, Osprey Publishing, p. 53, ISBN 1-85532-659-0.
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- [31] Davenport, Guy (1999), *Objects on a Table: Harmonious Disarray in Art and Literature*, Basic Books, p. 63, ISBN 1-58243-035-7.
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- [44] Koch, Philip (2006), "Greek and Roman Accounts of the Ancient Celts", in John, *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, ABC-Clío, p. 849.
- [45] Tacitus, *Germania* 43.
- [46] *CIL* XII.4218Maier, Bernhard (2004), *Die Religion der Kelten: Götter, Mythen, Weltbild*, CH Beck, p. 195.
- [47] *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, Dover, 2003 [1911].
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Erginus

In Greek mythology, **Erginus** (Ἐργῖνος) was king of Minyan Orchomenus in Boeotia. He was the son of Clymenus, his predecessor, and Buzyge (or Budeia);^{[1][2]} his brothers were Arrhon, Azeus, Pyleus, and Stratius.^[3] Erginus avenged his father's death at the hands of the Thebans; he made war against Thebes, inflicting a heavy defeat. The Thebans were compelled to pay King Erginus a tribute of 100 oxen per year for twenty years. However, the tribute ended earlier than Erginus expected, when Heracles attacked the Minyan emissaries sent to exact the tribute. This prompted a second war between Orchomenus and Thebes, only this time Thebes (under the leadership of Heracles) was victorious, and a double tribute was imposed on the Orchomenians.^{[4][5][6]} Erginus was slain in battle according to the version of the story given by most ancient writers (e.g., the *Bibliotheca*, Strabo,^[7] Eustathius). But according to Pausanias, Erginus was spared by Heracles and lived to a ripe old age, and even fathered two sons (Trophonius and Agamedes) on a younger woman.^[8]

Some authors^[9] identify him with **Erginus**, an Argonaut who piloted the *Argo* after Tiphys's death.^[10] Elsewhere, however, the Argonaut Erginus is said to be the son of Poseidon, and to have resided in the Carian city of Miletus,^{[11][12][13][14]} thus a distinct figure. Yet others suggested he was a son of Periclymenus.^[15]

Erginus was also the name of:

- A defender of Thebes against the Seven, killed by Hippomedon.^[16]
- A descendant of Diomedes, who was instructed by Temenus to steal the Palladium from Argos and did so together with Leager, a friend of Temenus'.^[17]

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- [3] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 9. 37. 1
- [4] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2. 4. 11
- [5] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 4. 10. 3–5
- [6] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 9. 37. 2
- [7] Strabo, *Geography*, 9. 2. 40
- [8] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 9. 37. 4
- [9] Pindar, *Olympian Ode* 4. 19
- [10] Scholia on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 2. 895; Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, 5. 65 & 8. 177
- [11] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 1. 185; 2. 896
- [12] Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, 1. 415
- [13] *Argonautica Orphica*, 150
- [14] Scholia on Pindar, *Pythian Ode* 4. 61
- [15] Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 14
- [16] Statius, *Thebaid*, 9. 305
- [17] Plutarch, *Quaestiones Graecae*, 48

Euphemus

Euphemus (Ancient Greek: Εὐφημος, pronounced: [eŷpʰɛ:mos] "reputable") in Greek mythology was the name of several distinct characters.

The Argonaut

Euphemus was a son of Poseidon, granted by his father the power to walk on water.^{[1][2]} He was counted among the Calydonian hunters^[3] and the Argonauts, and was connected with the legend of the foundation of Cyrene.^{[4][5]} Euphemus's mother is variously named: Europe, daughter of the giant Tityos;^{[6][2]} Doris or Mecionice, daughter of either Eurotas or Orion.^{[7][8][9]} In some accounts he is said to have been married to Laonome, sister of Heracles.^{[10][8]} His birthplace is given as "the banks of the Cephissus" by Pindar^[11] or Hyria in Boeotia by the *Megalai Ehoiai*,^[7] but his later residence was Taenarum in Laconia.^{[2][12][13][14]} Euphemus joined the voyage of the Argonauts, and served the crew as helmsman.^{[15][8]} He let a dove fly between the Symplegades to see if the ship would be able to pass as well.^[16] By a Lemnian woman (Malicha, Malache, or Lamache) he became the father of Leucophanes.^{[17][8]}

Euphemus was mythologically linked to the Greek colonization of Libya and foundation of Cyrene. In Pindar's Pythian Ode 4, the myth of him as the ancestor of the colonizers is recounted in the form of a prophecy by Medea, and runs as follows. When the Argonauts stop by the lake Tritonis in Libya, they encounter Eurypylus, a son of Poseidon, who offers them a clod of earth as a sign of hospitality. Euphemus takes the clod with instructions to throw it on the ground beside the entrance to the Underworld at Taenarum by which his descendants in the fourth generation would then rule over Libya. The clod is accidentally washed overboard and carried to the island Thera, and Libya is colonized from that island by Battus of Thera, an alleged distant descendant of Euphemus (by 17 generations), who founds Cyrene.^{[18][19][4][5]} The *Argonautica* by Apollonius Rhodius appears to follow a different version of the same myth: in the poem, when the Argonauts arrive near Lake Tritonis, Euphemus accepts the clod of earth from Triton who first introduces himself as Eurypylus but later reveals his true divine identity.^[20] Later, Euphemus has a dream of the clod producing drops of milk and then changing into a woman; in his dream, he has sex with the woman, and at the same time cries over her as if she were nursed by him; she then tells him that she is a daughter of Triton and Libya and the nurse of future children of Euphemus, and instructs him to entrust her to the care of the Nereids, promising that she would return in the future to provide a home for Euphemus' children. Euphemus consults Jason about this dream and, following his advice, throws the clod in the sea, whereupon it transforms into the island Calliste (Thera). The island is later colonized by the descendants of Euphemus who had previously been expelled from Lemnos and failed to find refuge in Sparta.^[21]

Euphemus was portrayed on the chest of Cypselus as the winner of the chariot race at the funeral games of Pelias.^[22]

The *Iliad*

In the *Iliad*, **Euphemus**, son of Troezenus, was a leader of the Thracian Cicones, and an ally of the Trojans.^{[23][24]} According to late writers, he was killed either by Achilles^[25] or by one of the following four: Diomedes, Idomeneus and the two Ajaxes who at one point united to attack the opponents.^[26]

Other mythical figures

- **Euphemus** was a descendant of the river god Axius and the father of the hero Eurybarus who defeated the female monster Sybaris.^[27]
- **Euphemus** was a surname of Zeus on Lesbos.^[28]
- **Euphemus** is given as the father of Daedalus by Hyginus,^[29] possibly by mistake instead of Eupalamus.

Notes and references

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- [9] Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 2. 43
- [10] Scholia on Pindar, Pythian Ode 4. 76
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Euryalus

Euryalus (Ancient Greek: Εὐρύαλος) refers to several different characters from Greek mythology and classical literature:

1. In the *Aeneid* by Virgil, Nisus and Euryalus are ideal friends and lovers,^[1] who died during a raid on the Rutulians.^{[2][3]}
2. Euryalus was the son of Mecisteus. He attacked the city of Thebes as one of the Epigoni, who took the city and avenged the deaths of their fathers, who had also attempted to invade Thebes. In Homer's *Iliad*, he fought in the Trojan War, where he was brother-in-arms of Diomedes, and one of the Greeks to enter the Trojan Horse. He lost the boxing match to Epeius at the funeral games for Patroclus.^{[3][4]} He is mentioned by Hyginus, who gives his parents as Pallas and Diomedes.^[5]
3. Euryalus was the name of a son of Euippe and Odysseus, who was mistakenly slain by his father.^{[6][7]}
4. Euryalus was the name of two of Penelope's suitors, one of whom came from Zacynthus, and the other one from Dulichium.^[8]
5. Euryalus was a suitor of Hippodamia who, like all the suitors before Pelops, was killed by Oenomaus.^[9]
6. Euryalus was one of the eight sons of Melas, who plotted against their uncle Oeneus and were slain by Tydeus.^[10]
7. Euryalus, son of Naubolus, was one of the Phaeacians encountered by Odysseus in the *Odyssey*.^[11]
8. Euryalus was a surname of Apollo.^[12]

Euryalus, son of Naubolus

In the *Odyssey*, Euryalus is a Phaeacian youth. Homer gives him the epithet "the peer of murderous Ares". Next to Laodamas, he is said to be the most handsome of the Phaeacians, and is the best wrestler. He convinces Laodamas to challenge Odysseus, then rebukes him when he refuses to participate, saying "No truly, stranger, nor do I think thee at all like one that is skilled in games, whereof there are many among men, rather art thou such an one as comes and goes in a benched ship, a master of sailors that are merchantmen, one with a memory for his freight, or that hath the charge of a cargo homeward bound, and of greedily gotten gains; thou seemest not a man of thy hands." When King Alcinous orders him to make amends, he gives Odysseus a bronze sword with a silver hilt and an ivory sheath.

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Hylas

In classical mythology, **Hylas** (Greek: Ὕλας) was a youth who served as a companion of Heracles (Roman Hercules). His abduction by water nymphs was a theme of ancient art, and has been an enduring subject for Western art in the classical tradition.

Genealogy

In Greek mythology, Hylas was the son of King Theiodamas of the Dryopians. Roman sources such as Ovid state that Hylas' father was Hercules and his mother was the nymph Melite, or that his mother was the wife of Theiodamas, whose adulterous affair with Heracles caused the war between him and her husband. He gained his beauty from his divine mother and his military prowess from his demigod father.

After Heracles killed Theiodamas in battle, he took on Hylas as arms bearer and taught him to be a warrior. The poet Theocritus (about 300 BC) wrote about the love between Heracles and Hylas: "We are not the first mortals to see beauty in what is beautiful. No, even Amphitryon's bronze-hearted son, who defeated the savage Nemean lion, loved a boy—charming Hylas, whose hair hung down in curls. And like a father with a dear son he taught him all the things which had made him a mighty man, and famous."^[1]

Argonauts

Heracles took Hylas with him on the Argo, making him one of the Argonauts. Hylas was kidnapped by nymphs of the spring of Pegae, (Dryope), that fell in love with him in Mysia and vanished without a trace (Apollonios Rhodios). This upset Heracles greatly, so he along with Polyphemus searched for a great length of time. The ship set sail without them. According to the Latin *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus, he never found Hylas because he had fallen in love with the nymphs and remained "to share their power and their love."



Hylas and the Nymphs (1896) by John William Waterhouse

Cultural references

The story of Hylas and the nymphs is alluded to in Book 3 of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Canto XII, Stanza 7:

Or that same daintie lad, which was so deare
To great Alcides, that when as he dyde
He wailed womanlike with many a teare,
And every wood, and every valley wyde
He fild with Hylas name; the Nymphes eke "Hylas" cryde.

Hylas is also mentioned in Christopher Marlowe's play *Edward II*: "Not Hylas was more mourned for of Hercules / Than thou hast been of me since thy exile" (Act I, Scene I, line 142-3), and in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Chapter 11. "...and gilded a boy that he might serve at the feast as Ganymede or Hylas."

"Hylas" is the name of one of the two characters in George Berkeley's *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*. He represents the materialist position against which Berkeley (through Philonous) argues. In this context, the name is derived from ὕλη, the classical Greek term for "matter."



Hylas and nymphs from a mosaic in Roman Gaul (3rd century)

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- [1] For a perspective from gay literary history, see *The World History of Male Love: Greek Mythology*, "Hercules and Hylas." (<http://www.gay-art-history.org/gay-history/gay-literature/gay-mythology-folktales/homosexual-greek-mythology/hercules-gay/hylas-gay/hercules-hylas-gay.html>) See also Pederasty in ancient Greece on the historical social institution.

External links

- Berkeley's *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*
- (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1363242/Hylas>)
- (<http://www.nd.edu/~frswrite/snite/2003/dittert.shtml>)
- (<http://www.mythweb.com/encyc/entries/hylas.html>)

Idas

In Greek mythology, **Idas** (Ancient Greek: Ἰδᾱς *Ídas*) was a son of Aphareus and Arene and brother of Lynceus. He and Lynceus loved Hilaeira and Phoebe and fought with their rival suitors, Castor and Polydeuces, killing the mortal brother Castor. He was also one of the Argonauts and a participant in the hunt for the Calydonian Boar. He kidnapped Marpessa. Apollo also desired her and Zeus made the girl choose. She chose the mortal Idas, fearing that Apollo could abandon her when she grew old. With Marpessa, Idas had one daughter named Cleopatra.^[1]



Marpessa and Idas, separated of Apollo by Zeus, Attic red-figure psykter, ca. 480 BC, Staatliche Antikensammlungen (Inv. 2417).

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- [1] Greek Myth Index: Idas (<http://www.mythindex.com/greek-mythology/I/Idas.html>)

Idmon

In Greek mythology, **Idmon** was an Argonaut seer. His father is said to have been Apollo but his mortal father was Abas (or Ampycus). His mother was Asteria, daughter of Coronus, or Cyrene, or else Antianeira, daughter of Pheres. By Laothoe he had a son Thestor.^{[1][2][3]} Idmon foresaw his own death in the Argonaut expedition but joined anyway and was killed by a boar in the land of the Mariandyni, in Bithynia.^{[1][4][5]} When in 559 BC the citizens of Megara Heraclea (today's Ereğli), they built a temple over the spot he was buried.

Other characters

The name **Idmon** may also refer to:

- One of the fifty sons of Aegyptus, who married and was killed by the Danaid Pylarge.^[6]
- The father of Arachne.^[7]
- The herald of Turnus.^[8]
- A figure briefly mentioned in Statius' *Thebaid*. He came from Epidaurus and was portrayed in the poem cleansing his wounds after a battle.^[9]

References

- [1] Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 14
- [2] Scholia on *Argonautica*, 1. 39
- [3] *Argonautica Orphica*, 185–187; 721
- [4] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 2.815–834
- [5] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 1. 9. 23
- [6] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2. 1. 5
- [7] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 6. 8
- [8] Virgil, *Aeneid*, 12. 75
- [9] Statius, *Thebaid*, 3. 339

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- Grimal, Pierre. Entry for Idmon. (http://books.google.com/books?vid=ISBN0631201025&id=ATUZ1H3kkRwC&pg=PA228&lpg=PA228&ots=x2v0OvfU-6&dq=idmon&sig=4ayU373TgpN7bf_Qq8jmi1ktZsk) *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*. Blackwell, 1986. ISBN 0-631-20102-5.
- Seaton, R.C. (editor and translator). *Apollonius Rhodius: Argonautica*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1912.
- William Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, v. 2, page 562, under *Idmon* (<http://www.ancientlibrary.com/smith-bio/1670.html>)

Iolaus

For the butterfly genus, see Iolaus (butterfly).

For the place on the List of National Heritage Sites in Jamaica, see Iolaus, Jamaica.

In Greek mythology, **Iolaus** (in Greek, Ιόλαος) was a Theban divine hero, son of Iphicles, Heracles's nephew, and brother to Automedusa.

He was famed for being Heracles's nephew and for helping with some of his Labors, and also for being one of the Argonauts. Through his daughter Leipephilene he was considered to have fathered the mythic and historic line of the kings of Corinth, ending with Telestes.

A genus of Lycaenid butterfly has been named after him.

Relationship with Heracles

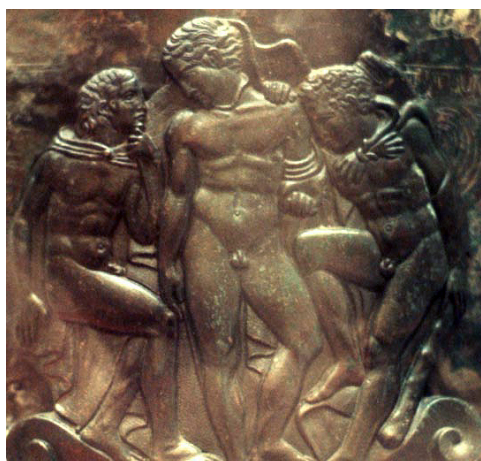
As a son of Iphicles, Iolaus was a nephew of Heracles. He often acted as Heracles' charioteer and companion. He was popularly regarded as Heracles's lover, and the shrine to him in Thebes was a place where male couples worshiped and made vows.^[1]

The Theban gymnasium was also named after him, and the *Iolaeia*, an athletic festival consisting of gymnastic and equestrian events, was held yearly in Thebes in his honor.^[2] The victors at the *Iolaea* were crowned with garlands of



Heracles and his nephew, Iolaus. 1st century BC mosaic from the Anzio Nymphaeum, Rome

myrtle.^[3]



Repoussé and engraved relief of Hercules and Iolaus
on the Ficoroni cista.
4th century BC Etruscan ritual vessel

Iolaus provided essential help to Heracles in his battle against the Hydra, his second labor. Seeing that Heracles was being overwhelmed by the multi-headed monster (the Lernaean Hydra), who grew two heads in place of each one cut off, Iolaus sprang to help, cauterizing each neck as Heracles beheaded it.

Heracles gave his wife, Megara, age thirty three, to Iolaus, then only sixteen years old^[4] – ostensibly because the sight of her reminded him of his murder of their three children. They had a daughter, Leipephilene. He was one of the Heraclidae.^[5]

Upon Heracles' death, Iolaus lit the funeral pyre, though according to some mythographers, this was Philoctetes instead. In other versions, it is Poeas.

According to Diodorus Siculus, Iolaus was sent by Heracles in Sardinia together with nine of the sons that he had fifty daughters of Thespius (the Tespiadi), to colonize the island, giving rise to the

people of Iolaensi. .^[6]

Iolaus and the Tespiesi were buried in Sardinia.

Aristotle said that Sardinia had practiced the rite of incubation, which is the liberation ritual of the people who were affected by nightmares and obsessions. These rituals included that the persons suffering from nightmares should sleep next to the tombs of heroes.^[7]

Simplicius addition, the eight books in the Commentaries Aristotle, that "the places where they were deposited and preserved corpses of the nine heroes got from Hercules Tespiesi and came to Sardinia with the colony of Iolaus , became the famous oracles." ^[8]

Solinus says: "The Iolesi, so named by him (to Iolaus), added a temple to his tomb, because he had freed Sardinia for many ills".^[9]

Television

Iolaus was a major character in the Universal Studios/Renaissance Pictures Hercules/Xena franchise. Michael Hurst played the character in two TV-Movies (*Hercules and the Amazon Women* and *Hercules in the Maze of the Minotaur*) and in *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys* (appearing as a recurring character in the first two seasons and a main character for the remaining seasons). Iolaus was not Hercules' nephew, but instead his best friend since childhood and his frequent traveling companion. It was stated that Iolaus (in the TV series) was 2 years older than Hercules. At times, Iolaus felt he was living in Hercules' shadow, but he often proved himself as a hero in his own right. The character was notably killed off several times – only to be eventually revived.

Hurst also played Iolaus 2 (a parallel universe double), who appeared in several episodes. This Iolaus had been a coward and fearfully served as jester to the Sovereign (Hercules' double). Thanks to Hercules, though, he learned self-confidence and became a hero. Iolaus 2 later left Hercules' side when he chose to marry Triton's mermaid daughter Nautica and with Aphrodite's help, he became a merman.

Hurst also played the character in two guest appearances on *Xena: Warrior Princess* ("Prometheus" and "The Quest"), and voiced the character in the animated film *Hercules and Xena – The Animated Movie: The Battle for Mount Olympus*. In the *Young Hercules* pilot movie and spin-off, Iolaus was a main character played by Dean O'Gorman. (O'Gorman also played the young version of Iolaus in a few *HTLJ* flashback episodes.)

Notes

- [1] Crompton, Louis, *Homosexuality and Civilization*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003, p. 123
- [2] Pindar, *Olympian Ode*, VIII, 84
- [3] Pindar, *Isthmian Ode* IV.
- [4] Plutarch, *Moralia* "The Dialogue on Love / Erotikos / Amatoria" Loeb edition, V. XII P.339
- [5] Ovid *Metamorphoses* IX, 394.
- [6] Diodorus Siculus, book IV, 29-30.
- [7] Aristotle, *Physics*, IV.
- [8] Simplicius, IV, M. Perra, *op. cit.*
- [9] Solinus, I-16: *Iolenses ab eo dicti sepulcro eius templum addiderunt quod ... Malis plurimis Sardiniam liberasset.*

Laertes

In Greek mythology, **Laërtes** (Greek: Λαέρτης) was the son of Arcesius and Chalcomedusa. He was the father of Odysseus (who was thus called Laertiades, Λαερτιάδης) and Ctímene by his wife Anticlea, daughter of the thief Autolycus. Laërtes was an Argonaut and participated in the hunt for the Calydonian Boar. Laërtes's title was King of the Cephallenians, which he presumably inherited from his father Arcesius and grandfather Cephalus. His realm included Ithaca and surrounding islands, and perhaps even the neighboring part of the mainland of other Greek city-states.

Another account says that Laërtes was not Odysseus's true father; rather, it was Sisyphus, who had seduced Anticlea.^[1]

Laertes stays away from Odysseus' home while Odysseus is gone. He keeps to himself on his farm, overcome with grief over Odysseus' absence and alone after his wife, Anticleia, died from grief herself. Odysseus finally comes to see Laertes after he has killed all the suitors competing for Penelope. He finds his father spading a plant, looking old and tired and filled with sadness. Odysseus keeps his identity to himself at first, but when he sees how disappointed Laertes is to learn that this "stranger" has no news of his son, Odysseus reveals himself, and proves his identity by reciting all the trees he received from Laertes when he was a boy. This emphasis on the land of Ithaca itself perhaps signifies that Odysseus has finally reconnected with his homeland, and his journey is over.^[2]

Laertes had trained Odysseus in husbandry. After their reunion, the two of them head off to Odysseus' home to fend off the families of the dead suitors. Athena infuses vigour into Laërtes, so he can help Odysseus. He kills Eupheithes, father of Antinous.^[3]

References

- [1] E.g. Servius on *Aeneid* 6.529.
 - [2] Homer. *Odyssey*. Trans. Stanley Lombardo. Canada: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000. Print.
 - [3] Homer, *Odyssey* XXIV; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII, 315.
-

Laocoön

Laocoön (🔊 /leɪˈpkeɪ.ɒn/; Ancient Greek: Λαοκόων, IPA: [laokóːɔːn]) the son of Acoetes^[1] is a figure in Greek and Roman mythology.

History

Laocoön is a Trojan priest of Poseidon^[2] (or Neptune), whose rules he had defied, either by marrying and having sons,^[3] or by having committed an impiety by making love with his wife in the presence of a cult image in a sanctuary.^[4] His minor role in the Epic Cycle narrating the Trojan War was of warning the Trojans in vain against accepting the Trojan Horse from the Greeks—"A deadly fraud is this," he said, "devised by the Achaean chiefs!"^[5]—and his subsequent divine execution by two serpents sent to Troy across the sea from the island of Tenedos, where the Greeks had temporarily camped.^[6]

Laocoön warned his fellow Trojans against the wooden horse presented to the city by the Greeks. In the *Aeneid*, Virgil gives Laocoön the famous line *Equo ne credite, Teucri / Quidquid id est, timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*, or "Do not trust the Horse, Trojans / Whatever it is, I fear the Greeks even bearing gifts." This line is the source of the saying: "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts."

Laocoön

There is also another Laocoön who was the tutor or uncle of Meleager. He was sent by Oineus as a chaperone for Meleager as an Argonaut.

Death

The most detailed description of Laocoön's grisly fate was provided by Quintus Smyrnaeus in *Posthomerica*, a later, literary version of events following the *Iliad*. According to Quintus, Laocoön begged the Trojans to set fire to the horse to ensure it was not a trick. Athena, angry with him and the Trojans, shook the ground around Laocoön's feet and painfully blinded him. The Trojans, watching this unfold, assumed Laocoön was punished for the Trojans' mutilating and doubting Sinon, the undercover Greek soldier sent to convince the Trojans to let him and the horse inside their city walls. Thus, the Trojans wheeled the great wooden Horse in. Laocoön did not give up trying to convince the Trojans to burn the horse, and Athena makes him pay even further. She sends two giant sea serpents to strangle and kill him and his two sons.^[7] In another version of the story, it was said that Poseidon sent the sea serpents to strangle and kill Laocoön and his two sons.

According to Apollodorus, it was Apollo who sent the two sea serpents. Laocoön had insulted Apollo by sleeping with his wife in front of the "divine image".^[8]



Laocoön and His Sons in the Vatican



Death of Laocoön from the Vatican Vergil.

Virgil employed the motif in the *Aeneid*. The Trojans, according to Virgil, disregarded Laocoön's advice and were taken in by the deceitful testimony of Sinon; in his resulting anger, Laocoön threw his spear at the Horse. Minerva, who was supporting the Greeks, at this moment sent sea-serpents to strangle Laocoön and his two sons, Antiphantes and Thymbraeus. "Laocoön, ostensibly sacrificing a bull to Neptune on behalf of the city (lines 201ff.), becomes himself the tragic victim, as the simile (lines 223–24) makes clear. In some sense, his death must be symbolic of the city as a whole," S. V. Tracy notes.^[9] According to the Hellenistic poet Euphorion of Chalcis,^[10] Laocoön is in fact punished for procreating upon holy ground sacred to Poseidon; only unlucky timing caused the Trojans to misinterpret his death as punishment for striking the Horse, which they bring into the city with disastrous consequences. The episode furnished the subject of Sophocles' lost tragedy, *Laocoön*.

In *Aeneid* Virgil describes the circumstances of Laocoön's death:

From the *Aeneid*

*Ille simul manibus tendit
divellere nodos*

*perfusus sanie vittas atroque
veneno,*

*clamores simul horrendos ad
sidera tollit:*

*qualis mugitus, fugit cum
saucius aram*

*taurus et incertam excussit
cervice securim.*

Literal English translation:

*At the same time he stretched forth to tear the
knots with his hands*

his fillets soaked with saliva and black venom

*at the same time he lifted to heaven horrendous
cries:*

*like the bellowing when a wounded bull has fled
from the altar*

and has shaken the ill-aimed axe from its neck.

John Dryden's translation:^[11]

*With both his hands he labors at the
knots;*

His holy fillets the blue venom blots;

His roaring fills the flitting air around.

*Thus, when an ox receives a glancing
wound,*

*He breaks his bands, the fatal altar
flies,*

*And with loud bellowings breaks the
yielding skies.*

The death of Laocoön was famously depicted in a much-admired marble *Laocoön and his Sons*, attributed by Pliny the Elder to the Rhodian sculptors Agesander, Athenodoros, and Polydorus, which stands in the Vatican Museums, Rome. Copies have been executed by various artists, notably Baccio Bandinelli. These show the complete sculpture (with conjectural reconstructions of the missing pieces) and can be seen in Rhodes, at the Palace of the Grand Master of the Knights of Rhodes, Rome, the Uffizi Gallery in Florence and in front of the Archaeological Museum, Odessa, Ukraine, amongst others.

The marble Laocoön provided the central image for Lessing's *Laocoön*, 1766, an aesthetic polemic directed against Winckelmann and the comte de Caylus. Daniel Albright reengages the role of the figure of Laocoön in aesthetic thought in his book *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Literature, Music, and Other Arts*. [cite El Greco painting]

In addition to other literary references, John Barth employs a bust of Laocoön in his novella, *The End of the Road*. The R.E.M. song "Laughing" references Laocoön, rendering him female ("Laocoön and her two sons"). The marble's pose is parodied in the comic book *Asterix and the Laurel Wreath*. American author Joyce Carol Oates also references Laocoön in her 1989 novel *American Appetites*. In Stave V of *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens (1843), Scrooge awakes on Christmas morning "...making a perfect Laocoon of himself with his stockings." Barbara Tuchman's *The March of Folly* begins with an extensive analysis of the Laocoön story.

Notes

- [1] "Laocoon, son of Acoetes, brother of Anchises, and priest of Apollo..." (Hyginus, *Fabula* 135.
- [2] According to Virgil: *Laocoon, ductus Neptuno sorte sacerdos* (2.101)
- [3] According to Hyginus
- [4] According to Servius.
- [5] Quintus Smyrnaeus X.420f (Text on-line (<http://www.theoi.com/Text/QuintusSmyrnaeus12.html>)).
- [6] *Aeneid* 2. 199–227.
- [7] Quintus of Smyrna. *The Trojan Epic Posthomeric*. Tr. Alan James. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004. Print.
- [8] Apollodorus, *Epitome*, Epit. E.5.18 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0022:text=Epitome:book=E:chapter=5:section=18>)
- [9] S. V. Tracy, "Laocoon's Guilt" (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/294668>). *The American Journal of Philology* **108.3** (Autumn 1987), p. 453.
- [10] Euphorion's poem is lost, but Servius alludes to the lines in his scholia on the *Aeneid*.
- [11] See (<http://www.bartleby.com/13/2.html>), line 290

References

- Gall, Dorothee and Anja Wolkenhauer (hg). *Laokoon in Literatur und Kunst: Schriften des Symposions "Laokoon in Literatur und Kunst" vom 30.11.2006, Universität Bonn* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009) (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde, 254).

Classical sources

Compiled by Tracy, 1987:452 note 3 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/294668>), which also mentions a fragmentary line possibly by Nicander.

- Arctinus, OCT Homer 5.107.23
- Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.48.2
- Hyginus, *Fabula* 135
- Petronius 89; Servius on *Aeneid* 2.201
- pseudo-Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.18
- Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomeric* 12.445ff
- John Tzetzes, *Ad Lycophron* 347

Lynceus

Lynceus (in Greek, *Lynkeus*) was the jealous murderer of Castor, along with his brother, Idas. Idas and Lynceus murdered Castor because they all (along with Polydeuces) sought Phoebe and Hilaeira, daughters of Leucippus (who was also Idas and Lynceus' uncle in some versions). Lynceus was one of the Argonauts and he participated in the hunt for the Calydonian Boar. He was a son of Aphareus and Arene and was said to have excellent sight, even able to see through trees, walls and underground.

References

- *Bibliotheca* I, viii, 2 and ix, 16; III, x, 3 and xi,2.
- Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* I, 151-55;
- Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII, 304.
- Iamblichus, *Invitation to Philosophy*

Medea

Medea (Greek: Μήδεια, *Mēdeia*, Georgian: მედეა, *Medea*) is a Colchian woman in Greek mythology. She was the daughter of King Aeëtes of Colchis,^[1] niece of Circe, granddaughter of the sun god Helios, and later wife to the hero Jason, with whom she had two children, Mermeros and Pheres. In Euripides's play *Medea*, Jason leaves Medea when Creon, king of Corinth, offers him his daughter, Glauce.^[2] The play tells about how Medea avenges her husband's betrayal.

The myths involving Jason have been interpreted by specialists^[3] as part of a class of myths that tell how the Hellenes of the distant heroic age, before the Trojan War, faced the challenges of the pre-Greek "Pelasgian" cultures of mainland Greece, the Aegean and Anatolia. Jason, Perseus, Theseus, and above all Heracles, are all "liminal" figures, poised on the threshold between the old world of shamans, chthonic earth deities, and the new Bronze Age Greek ways.^[4]

Medea figures in the myth of Jason and the Argonauts, a myth known best from a late literary version worked up by Apollonius of Rhodes in the 3rd century BC and called the *Argonautica*. However, for all its self-consciousness and researched archaic vocabulary, the late epic was based on very old, scattered materials. Medea is known in most stories as an enchantress and is often depicted as being a priestess of the goddess Hecate or a witch. The myth of Jason and Medea is very old, originally written around the time Hesiod wrote the *Theogony*. It was known to the composer of the *Little Iliad*, part of the Epic Cycle.



Medea by Evelyn De Morgan.

Jason and Medea



Medea by Anthony Frederick Augustus Sandys (painted 1866-68); its rejection for exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1868 caused a storm of protest

Medea's role began after Jason arrived from Iolcus to Colchis, to claim his inheritance and throne by retrieving the Golden Fleece. In the most complete surviving account, the *Argonautica* of Apollonius, Medea fell in love with him and promised to help him, but only on the condition that if he succeeded, he would take her with him and marry her. Jason agreed. In a familiar mythic motif, Aeëtes promised to give him the fleece, but only if he could perform certain tasks. First, Jason had to plough a field with fire-breathing oxen that he had to yoke himself. Medea gave him an unguent with which to anoint himself and his weapons, to protect him from the bulls' fiery breath. Then, Jason had to sow the teeth of a dragon in the ploughed field (compare the myth of Cadmus). The teeth sprouted into an army of warriors. Jason was forewarned by Medea, however, and knew to throw a rock into the crowd. Unable to determine where the rock had come from, the soldiers attacked and killed each other. Finally, Aeëtes made Jason fight and kill the sleepless dragon that guarded the fleece. Medea put the beast to sleep with her narcotic herbs. Jason then took the fleece and sailed away with Medea, as he had promised. Apollonius says that

Medea only helped Jason in the first place because Hera had convinced Aphrodite or Eros to cause Medea to fall in love with him. Medea distracted her father as they fled by killing her brother Absyrtus. In some versions, Medea is said to have dismembered his body and scattered his parts on an island, knowing her father would stop to retrieve them for proper burial; in other versions, it is Absyrtus himself who pursued them, and was killed by Jason. During the fight, Atalanta was seriously wounded, but Medea healed her.

According to some versions, Medea and Jason stopped on her aunt Circe's island so that she could be cleansed after the murder of her brother, relieving her of blame for the deed.

On the way back to Thessaly, Medea prophesied that Euphemus, the Argo's helmsman, would one day rule over all Libya. This came true through Battus, a descendant of Euphemus.

The *Argo* then reached the island of Crete, guarded by the bronze man, Talos (Talus). Talos had one vein which went from his neck to his ankle, bound shut by a single bronze nail. According to Apollodorus, Talos was slain either when Medea drove him mad with drugs, deceived him that she would make him immortal by removing the nail, or was killed by Poeas's arrow (Apollodorus 1.140). In the *Argonautica*, Medea hypnotized him from the *Argo*, driving him mad so that he dislodged the nail, ichor flowed from the wound, and he bled to death (Argonautica 4.1638). After Talos died, the *Argo* landed.

While Jason searched for the Golden Fleece, Hera, who was still angry at Pelias, conspired to make him fall in love with Medea, who she hoped would kill Pelias. When Jason and Medea returned to Iolcus, Pelias still refused to give up his throne. Medea conspired to have Pelias' own daughters kill him. She told them she could turn an old ram into a young ram by cutting up the old ram and boiling it. During the demonstration, a live, young ram jumped out of the pot. Excited, the girls cut their father into pieces and threw him into a pot. Having killed Pelias, Jason and Medea fled to Corinth. This is much like what she did with Aeson, Jason's father.



Jason et Médée by Gustave Moreau (1865).

Many endings

In Corinth, Jason abandoned Medea for the king's daughter, Glauce. Medea took her revenge by sending Glauce a dress and golden coronet, covered in poison. This resulted in the deaths of both the princess and the king, Creon, when he went to save her. According to the tragic poet Euripides, Medea continued her revenge, murdering her two children by Jason. Afterward, she left Corinth and flew to Athens in a golden chariot driven by dragons sent by her grandfather Helios, god of the sun.



Medea (about to murder her children) by Eugène Ferdinand Victor Delacroix (1862).

Before the fifth century BC, there seem to have been two variants of the myth's conclusion. According to the poet Eumelus to whom the fragmentary epic *Korinthiaka* is usually attributed, Medea killed her children by accident.^[5] The poet Creophylus, however, blamed their murders on the citizens of Corinth.^[6] Medea's deliberate murder of her children, then, appears to be Euripides' invention although some scholars believe Neophron created this alternate tradition.^[7] Her filicide would go on to become the standard for later writers.^[8] Pausanias, writing in the late 2nd century, records five different versions of what happened to Medea's children after reporting that he has seen a monument for them while traveling in Corinth.^[9]

Fleeing from Jason, Medea made her way to Thebes where she healed Heracles (the former Argonaut) for the murder of Iphitus. In return, Heracles gave her a place to stay in Thebes until the Thebans drove her out in anger, despite Heracles' protests.

She then fled to Athens where she met and married Aegeus. They had one son, Medus, although Hesiod makes Medus the son of Jason.^[10]

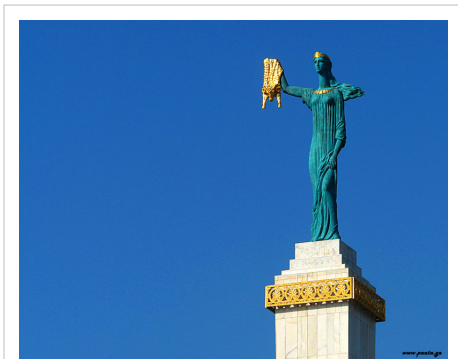
Her domestic bliss was once again shattered by the arrival of Aegeus'

long-lost son, Theseus. Determined to preserve her own son's inheritance, Medea convinced her husband that Theseus was a threat and that he should be disposed of. As Medea handed Theseus a cup of poison, Aegeus recognized the young man's sword as his own, which he had left behind many years previous for his newborn son, to be given to him when he came of age. Knocking the cup from Medea's hand, Aegeus embraced Theseus as his own.

Medea then returned to Colchis and, finding that Aeëtes had been deposed by his brother Perses, promptly killed her uncle, and restored the kingdom to her father. Herodotus reports another version, in which Medea and her son Medus fled from Athens to the Iranian plateau and lived among the Aryans, who then changed their name to the Medes.^[11]

Personae of Medea

Though the early literary presentations of Medea are lost,^[12] Apollonius of Rhodes, in a redefinition of epic formulas, and Euripides, in a dramatic version for a specifically Athenian audience, each employed the figure of Medea; Seneca offered yet another tragic Medea, of witchcraft and potions, and Ovid rendered her portrait three times for a sophisticated and sceptical audience in Imperial Rome. The far-from-static evolution undergone by the figure of Medea was the subject of a recent set of essays published in 1997.^[13] Other, non-literary traditions guided the vase-painters,^[14] and a localized, chthonic presence of Medea was propitiated with unrecorded emotional overtones at Corinth, at the sanctuary devoted to her slain children,^[15] or locally venerated elsewhere as a foundress of cities.^[16]



The statue of Medea in the center of Batumi, Georgia, one of the main Colchian cities.

Medea in popular culture

The dramatic episodes in which Medea plays a role have ensured that she remains vividly represented in popular culture.

Literature

Primary sources

Cicero In the court case Pro Caelio, the name Medea is mentioned at least five times, as a way to make fun of Clodia, sister of P. Clodius Pulcher, the man who exiled Cicero.

- Ovid^[17]

Heroides XII

Metamorphoses VII, 1-450

Tristia iii.9

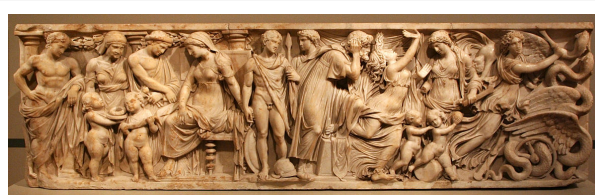
- Euripides, *Medea*
- Neophron, *Medea* (fragments from the play)
- Hyginus, *Fabulae* 21-26
- Pindar, *Pythian Odes*, III
- Seneca: *Medea* (tragedy)
- *Bibliotheca* I, 23-28
- Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*
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- Herodotus, *Histories* VII.62i
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- Jean Anouilh, *Medea*
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- Robinson Jeffers, *Medea*
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- Percival Everett, *For Her Dark Skin*
- Maxwell Anderson, *The Wingless Victory*
- Geoffrey Chaucer *The Legend of Good Women* (1386)
- Michael Wood, *In Search of Myths & Heroes: Jason and the Golden Fleece*
- Chrysanthos Mentis Bostantzoglou (Bost), *Medea* (parody of Medea of Euripides)

Related literature

- *Medea* (Ovid's lost tragedy - two lines are extant)^[18]
- Marina Carr, *By the Bog of Cats*
- A. R. Gurney, *The Golden Fleece*
- Pierre Corneille *Médée* (tragedy, 1635)
- Heiner Müller, *Medeamaterial* and *Medeaplay*
- William Morris *Life and Death of Jason* (epic poem, 1867)
- Franz Grillparzer, *Das goldene Vliess (The Golden Fleece)* (play, 1822)
- Dorothy M. Johnson, *Witch Princess* (novel, 1967)
- Percival Everett, *For Her Dark Skin* (novel, 1990)
- H. M. Hoover, *The Dawn Palace: The Story of Medea* (novel, 1988)
- Christa Wolf, *Medea (a novel)* (published in German 1993, translated to English 1998)



Medea Sarcophagus, Altes Museum, Berlin

- Cherríe Moraga, *The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea* (combines classical Greek myth Medea with Mexicana/o legend of La Llorona and Aztec myth of lunar deity Coyolxauhqui)
- Cicero, *Pro Caelio* (political speech) Cicero refers to Clodia as *hanc Palatinam Medeam*, "this Medea of the Palatine"
- Stuart Hill, *Blade Of Fire* (Character portrayed as based on Medea in this Young adult novel)
- Rick Riordan (author), "The Lost Hero"; Medea, having being resurrected by vengeful goddess Gaia, runs a department store in Chicago that the three main heroes Jason, Leo & Piper encounter on their quest to rescue Hera/Juno. When Piper tries to get her friends to leave by recounting Medea's villainous deeds, Medea counters that she was the victim, then tries to "Charm-speak" Leo & Jason into killing each other.

Music

- Francesco Cavalli *Giasone* (opera, 1649)
- Jean-Baptiste Lully *Thésée* (opera, 1674)
- Antonio Caldara "Medea in Corinto" (cantata for alto, 2 violins and basso continuo, 1711)
- Marc-Antoine Charpentier *Médée* (tragédie en musique, 1693)
- Georg Anton Benda composed the melodrama *Medea* in 1775 on a text by Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter.
- Luigi Cherubini composed the opera *Médée* in 1797 and it is Cherubini's best-known work, but better known by its Italian title, *Medea*.
- Simon Mayr composed his opera *Medea in Corinto* to a libretto of [iuseppe Felice Romano. It premiered in Naples in 1813.
- Saverio Mercadante composed his opera *Medea* in 1851 to a libretto by Salvatore Cammarano.
- Darius Milhaud composed the opera *Médée* in 1939 to a text by Madeleine Milhaud (his wife and cousin).
- American composer Samuel Barber wrote his Medea ballet (later renamed *The Cave of the Heart*) in 1947 for Martha Graham and derived from that *Medea's Meditation & Dance of Vengeance* Op. 23a in 1955. The musical *Blast!* uses an arrangement of Barber's *Medea* as their end to Act I.
- Ray E. Luke's "Medea" won the 1979 Rockefeller Foundation/New England Conservatory Competition for Best New American Opera.
- Jacob Druckman's 1980 orchestral work, *Prism*, is based on three different renderings of the Medea myth by Charpentier, Cavalli, and Cherubini. Each movement incorporates material and quotations from the music of Druckman's three predecessors. At the time of his death, Druckman was writing a large-scale grand opera on the Medea myth commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera.
- Star of Indiana—the drum and bugle corps that *Blast!* formed out of—used Parados, Kantikos Agonias, and Dance of Vengeance in their 1993 production (with Bartók's Allegro from *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste*), between Kantikos and Vengeance.
- In 1993 Chamber Made produced an opera *Medea* composed by Gordon Kerry, with text by Justin Macdonnell after Seneca.
- Michael John LaChiusa scored "Marie Christine", a Broadway musical with heavy opera influence based on the story of Medea. The production premiered at the Vivian Beaumont Theater in December 1999 for a limited run under Lincoln Center Theatre. LaChiusa's score and book were nominated for a Tony Award in 2000, as was a tour-de-force performance by three-time Tony winner Audra McDonald.



Jason and Medea by John William Waterhouse (1907)

- In 1991, the world premiere was held in the Teatro Arriaga, Bilbao of the opera *Medea* by Mikis Theodorakis. This was the first in Theodorakis' trilogy of lyrical tragedies, the others being *Electra* and *Antigone*.
- Oscar Strasnoy's opera "*Midea* (2)", based on Irina Possamai's libretto, premiered in 2000 at Teatro Caio Melisso, Spoleto, Italy. Orpheus Opera Award.
- Rockettothesky *medea* 2008
- instrumental chamber music piece *Medea* by Dietmar Bonnen 2008
- Dutch progressive rock band Kayak (band), with the song *Medea*, on their 2008 release *Coming Up For Air*
- Dutch one-man project Spinvis, with the song *Medea*, on his album *Goochelaars & Geesten* in 2007
- Vienna Teng, with the song *My Medea* in her 2004 album *Warm Strangers*.
- The Finnish melodic death metal band Insomnium has a song about her called *Medeia* on their album *In the Halls of Awaiting*, which was released in 2002.
- Mauro Lanza composed the music to *Le Songe De Médée*, a ballet choreographed by Angelin Preljocaj for the Ballet de l'Opéra national de Paris and featured in the film *La Danse*.
- Alina Novikova (composer) and Daria Zholnerova, produced an opera *Medea*, based on Innokentiy Annenskiy, Evripid's translation. First performed in 2011, St. Petersburg, Russia

Cinema and television

- In the 1963 film *Jason and the Argonauts*, Medea was portrayed by Nancy Kovack.
- In the 2000 Hallmark presentation *Jason and the Argonauts*, Medea was portrayed by Jolene Blalock.
- In 1969, the Italian director Pier Paolo Pasolini directed a film adaptation of *Medea* featuring the opera singer Maria Callas in the title role.
- In 1978, the film *A Dream of Passion* in which Melina Mercouri as an actress portraying Medea seeks out Ellen Burstyn a mother who recently murdered her children.
- In 1988, director Lars von Trier filmed his *Medea* for Danish television, using a pre-existing script by filmmaker Carl Theodor Dreyer. Cast included Udo Kier, Kirsten Olesen, Henning Jensen, Mette Munk Plum.
- In the 1992 film *Highway to Hell*, Medea was portrayed by Anne Meara.
- Medea (under the name of Caster) is one of the antagonists in the visual novel and anime *Fate/Stay Night*.
- In the 2005 film *L'enfer* (Hell) a student Anne (Marie Gillain) takes a formal oral exam on the subject of Medea. Her words are spoken over images of her sister Sophie (Emmanuelle Béart) playing with her two children implying an analogy.^[19]
- In 2007, director Tonino De Bernardi filmed a modern version of the myth, set in Paris and starring Isabelle Huppert as Medea, called *Médée Miracle*. The character of Medea lives in Paris with Jason, who leaves her.
- In 2009, *Medea* was shot by director Natalia Kuznetsova. Film was created by the tragedy of Seneca in a new-for-cinema genre of Rhythmodrama, in which the main basis of acting and atmosphere is music written before shooting.

Notes

- [1] Colchis was an ancient Georgian Kingdom
- [2] Glauce is known as Creusa in Seneca's *Medea* and in Propertius 2.16.30.
- [3] See, for example, Nita Krevans, "Medea as foundation-heroine", in James Joseph Clauss, Sarah Iles Johnston, eds. *Medea: essays on Medea in myth, literature, philosophy, and art* (Princeton University Press) 1997:71-82.
- [4] For this general aspect, see especially Carl A.P. Ruck and Danny Staples, *The World of Classical Myth: Gods and Goddesses, Heroines and Heroes* University of North Carolina 1994, part III: The Liminal Hero.
- [5] As noted in a scholium to Pindar's Olympian Ode 13.74; cf. Pausanias 2.3.10-11.
- [6] As noted in the scholium to *Medea* 264.
- [7] See McDermott 1985, 10-15.
- [8] Hyginus *Fabulae* 25; Ovid *Met.* 7.391ff.; Seneca *Medea*; *Bibliotheca* 1.9.28 favors Euripides' version of events, but also records the variant that the Corinthians killed Medea's children in retaliation for her crimes.
- [9] Pausanias 2.3.6-11
- [10] Hesiod *Theogony* 1000-2
- [11] Herodotus *Histories* VII.62i
- [12] The lost *Corinthiaca* of Naupactos and the *Building of the Argo*, by Epimenides of Crete, for instances.
- [13] *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy, and Art*, James Joseph Clauss and Sarah Iles Johnston, eds., (Princeton University Press) 1997. Includes a bibliography of works focused on Medea.
- [14] As on the bell krater at the Cleveland Museum of Art (91.1) discussed in detail by Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, "Medea at a Shifting Distance: Images and Euripidean tragedy", in Clauss and Johnston 1997, pp 253-96.
- [15] Edouard Will, *Corinth* 1955. "By identifying Medea, Ino and Melikertes, Bellerophon, and Hellotis as pre-Olympianprecursors of Hera, Poseidon, and Athena, he could give to Corinth a religious antiquity it did not otherwise possess", wrote Nancy Bookidis, "The Sanctuaries of Corinth", *Corinth* 20 (2003)
- [16] "Pindar shows her prophesying the foundation of Cyrene; Herodotus makes her the legendary eponymous founder of the Medes; Callimachus and Apollonius describe colonies founded by Colchians originally sent out in pursuit of her" observes Nita Krevans, "Medea as foundation heroine", in Clauss and Johnston 1997 pp 71-82 (p. 71).
- [17] Ovid also wrote a full play called *Medea* from which only a few lines are preserved.
- [18] Fragments are printed and discussed by Theodor Heinze, *Der XII. Heroidenbrief: Medea an Jason Mit einer Beilage: Die Fragmente der Tragödie Medea P. Ovidius Naso.* (in series Mnemosyne, *Supplements*, 170. 1997
- [19] http://filmref.com/journal/archives/2006/02/lenfer_2005.html

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- Wygant, Amy, *Medea, Magic, and Modernity in France: Stages and Histories, 1553-1797* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007).

Meleager

This article is about the mythological figure, for other uses see Meleager (disambiguation).

In Greek mythology, **Meleager** (pronounced /ˌmɛliˈeɪɡər/^[1], Ancient Greek: Μελέαγρος *Meléagros*) was a hero venerated in his *temenos* at Calydon in Aetolia. He was already famed as the host of the Calydonian boar hunt in the epic tradition that was reworked by Homer.^[2] Meleager was the son of Althaea and the vintner Oeneus and, according to some accounts father of Parthenopeus and Polydora.



Meleager et Atalanta, after Giulio Romano.

When Meleager was born, the Moirai (the Fates) predicted he would only live until a brand, burning in the family hearth, was consumed by fire. Overhearing them, Althaea immediately doused and hid the brand.^[3] Meleager married Cleopatra, daughter of Idas. However, in some versions, he had to defeat Atalanta in a footrace, in which he was aided by Athena.

Oeneus sent Meleager to gather up heroes from all over Greece^[4] to hunt the Calydonian Boar that had been terrorizing the area, rooting up the vines, Oeneus having omitted Artemis at a festival in which he honored the other gods. In addition to the heroes he required, he chose Atalanta, a fierce huntress, whom he loved.^[5] According to one account of the hunt, when Hylaeus and Rhaecus, two centaurs, tried to rape Atalanta, Meleager killed them. Then, Atalanta wounded the boar and Meleager killed it. He awarded her the hide since she had drawn the first drop of blood.

Meleager's brother Toxeus, the "archer",^[6] and Plexippus (Althaea's brother) grew enraged that the prize was given to a woman. Meleager killed them in the following argument. He also killed Iphicles and Eurypylos for insulting Atalanta. When Althaea found out that Meleager had killed her brother and one of her sons, Althaea placed the brand that she had stolen from the Fates (the one that the Fates predicted, once engulfed with fire, would kill Meleager) upon the fire, thus fulfilling the prophecy and killing Meleager. The women who mourned his death were turned into guineafowl (Meleagrides).

Meleager is also mentioned as one of the Argonauts. In Hades, his is the only shade that does not flee Heracles, who has come after Cerberus. In Bacchylides' Ode V, Meleager is still in his shining armor, so formidable, in Bacchylides' account, that Heracles reaches for his bow to defend himself. Heracles is moved to tears by Meleager's account; Meleager has left his sister^[7] Deianira unwedded in his father's house, and entreats Heracles to take her as bride;^[8] here Bacchylides breaks off his account of the meeting, without noting that in this way Heracles in the Underworld chooses a disastrous wife.

With his wife Kleopatra, daughter of Idas and Marpessa,^[9] he had a daughter, Polydora, who became the bride of Protesilaus, who left her bed on their wedding-night to join the expedition to Troy.

Among the Romans, the heroes assembled by Meleager for the Calydonian hunt provided a theme of multiple nudes in striking action, to be portrayed frieze-like on sarcophagi.

Meleager's story has similarities with the Scandinavian *Norna-Gests þátttr*.



Statue of
Meleager
modeled
after
Skopas



Meleager sarcophagus



Meleager and Atalanta (17th
century) by Jacob Jordaens

Ancient sources

- Bacchylides Fr 5.93
- Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* I, 190-201.
- Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* I, viii, 1-3.
- Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII, 269-525.

Notes

- [1] Wells, John C. (2009). "Meleager". *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*. London: Pearson Longman. ISBN 978-1-4058-8118-0.
- [2] Homer, *Iliad* IX, 529-99.
- [3] Hyginus, *Fabula* 171; pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 1.8.2.
- [4] pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 1.8.2.
- [5] Euripides, Frg. 520, noted by Karl Kerényi, *The Heroes of the Greeks*, 1959:119 note 673.
- [6] There were two further brothers, Thyreus, the "porter", and Klymenos, the "famous"— though Meleager is by far the most renowned of the four— and two sisters, Gorge and Deianira (Kerényi 1959:199 and Genealogical table G, p. 375).
- [7] Or perhaps his half-sister, if Dionysus is the real father of Deianira, as pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 1.8.1, would have it; Oineos himself, "to judge by his name a double of the wine-god", Kerényi observes (Kerényi 1959:199).
- [8] Scholia on *Iliad* 21.194, noted by Kerényi 1959:180 note 103.
- [9] Kerényi 1959: Genealogical table F, p. 372.

Mopsus

Mopsus or **Mopsos** (Ancient Greek: Μόψος) was the name of two famous seers in Greek mythology. A historical or legendary *Mopsos* or *Mukšuš* may have been the founder of a house in power at widespread sites in the coastal plains of Pamphylia and Cilicia (today's Turkey) during the early Iron Age.

Son of Manto and Rhacius or Apollo

Mopsus, a celebrated seer and diviner, was the son of Manto, daughter of the mythic seer Tiresias, and of Rhacius of Caria or of Apollo himself, the oracular god. Greeks of the Classical age accepted Mopsus as a historical figure, though the anecdotes concerning him bridge legend and myth.

Mopsus (and perhaps a tradition of his heirs, like the Melampodidae, the Iamidae from Olympia or the Eumolpidae at Eleusis) officiated at the altars of Apollo at Klaros, which he founded; at Klaros the tradition was that he had been the son of a daughter of the seer Teiresias named Manto, literally "seeress".^[1] His unerring wisdom and discernment gave rise to the ancient Greek proverb, "more certain than Mopsus". He distinguished himself at the siege of Thebes; but he was held in particular veneration at the court of Amphilocheus at Colophon on the Ionian coast of Asia Minor, adjacent to Caria.

The 12th century Byzantine mythographer John Tzetzes^[2] reports anecdotes of the prowess of Mopsus. Having been consulted, on one occasion, by Amphilocheus, who wished to know what success would attend his arms in a war which he was going to undertake, he predicted the greatest calamities; but Calchas, who had been the soothsayer of the Greeks during the Trojan War, promised the greatest successes. Amphilocheus followed the opinion of Calchas, but the prediction of Mopsus was fully verified. This had such an effect upon Calchas that he died soon after. His death is attributed by sources used by John Tzetzes to another mortification of the same nature: in this case, the two soothsayers, jealous of each other's fame, came to a different trial of their skill in divination. Calchas first asked his antagonist how many figs a neighboring tree bore; ten thousand and one, replied Mopsus. The figs were gathered, and his answer was found to be true. Mopsus now, to try his adversary, asked him how many young ones a certain pregnant sow would bring forth, and at what time. Calchas confessed his inability to answer, whereupon Mopsus declared that she would be delivered on the morrow, and would bring forth ten young ones, of which only one would be a male. The morrow proved the veracity of his prediction, and Calchas died through the grief which his defeat produced.^[3] Amphilocheus subsequently having occasion to visit Argos, entrusted the sovereign power to Mopsus, to keep it for him during the space of a year. On his return, however, Mopsus refused to restore to him the kingdom,^[4] whereupon, having quarreled, they engaged and slew each other.^[5] According to another legend reported by Tzetzes,^[6] he was slain by Herakles.

Mopsus was venerated as founder in several cities of Pamphylia and the Cilician plain, among them Mopsuestia, "the house (*hestia*) of Mopsus" in Cilicia, and Mallos, where he quarreled with his co-founder Amphilocheus and both were buried in tumuli, from which neither could see that of the other. At Mopsoukrene, the "spring of Mopsus", he had an oracular site.^[7]

Argonaut

Mopsus, son of Ampyx and a nymph (sometimes named as Chloris), born at Titaressa in Thessaly, was also a seer and augur. In Thessaly the place name *Mopsion* recalled his own.^[8] The earliest evidence of him is inscribed on the strap of a soldier's shield, found at Olympia and dated c.600-575 BC.^[9] According to Diodorus Siculus (III.55), Mopsus was a Thracian commander who had lived long before the Trojan War, and along with Sipylus the Scythian, had been driven into exile from Thrace by its king Lycurgus. Sometime later, he and Sipylus defeated the Libyan Amazons in a pitched battle, in which their queen Myrine was slain, and the Thracians pursued the surviving Amazons all the way to Libya.

This Mopsus was one of two seers among the Argonauts,^[10] and was said to have understood the language of birds, having learned augury from Apollo. He had competed at the funeral-games for Jason's father^[11] and was among the Lapiths who fought the Centaurs. While fleeing across the Libyan desert from angry sisters of the slain Gorgon Medusa, Mopsus died from the bite of a viper that had grown from a drop of Medusa's blood. Medea was unable to save him, even by magical means. The Argonauts buried him with a monument by the sea, and a temple was later erected on the site.^[12]

Ovid places him also at the hunt of the Calydonian Boar, although the hunt occurred after the Argonauts' return.^[13]

Historical person

The Christian chronicler Eusebius of Caesarea was as convinced of Mopsus' historicity as his pagan predecessors and contemporaries: in his parallel chronologies he entered under the year corresponding to 1184/83 *Mopsus reigned in Cilicia*.^[14] In the early 16th century, German chronicler Johannes Aventinus placed him in the reign of Ingaevone, in ca. 22nd century BC, along the Sava River, where, allegedly, he defeated Myrine.

Names similar to *Mopsos*, whether Greek or Anatolian, are also attested in Near Eastern languages. Since the discovery of a bilingual Luwian-Phoenician inscription in Karatepe (in Cilicia) in 1946-7, it has been conjectured that Mopsos was an historical person.^[15] The inscription is dated to c. 700 BC, and the person speaking in it, '-z-t-w-d (Phoenician) / Azatiwataš (Luwian), professes to be king of the d-n-n-y-m / Hiyawa, and describes his dynasty as "the house of M-p-š / Mukšuš". Apparently, he is a descendant of Mopsus. The Phoenician name of the people recalls one of the Homeric names of the Greeks, *Danaoi* with the -m plural, whereas the Luwian name *Hiyawa* probably goes back to Hittite *Ahhiyā(wa)*, which is, according to most interpretations, the "Achaean", or Mycenaean Greek, settlement in Asia Minor. Ancient Greek authors ascribe a central role to Mopsus in the colonization of Pamphylia.^[16]

A 13th-century date for the historical Mopsus may be confirmed by a Hittite tablet from Boğazkale which mentions a person called *Mukšuš* in connection with Madduwattaš of Arzawa and Attaršiyaš of Ahhiyā. This text is dated to the reign of Arnuwandaš III. Therefore, some scholars^[17] associate Mopsus' activities along the coast of Asia Minor and the Levant with the famous Sea Peoples' attacking Egypt in the beginning of the 12th century BC, one of those peoples being the *Denyen*—comparable to the d-n-n-y-m of the Karatepe inscription. The Sea People identification is, however, questioned by other scholars.^[18]

The name of the king erecting the Karatepe inscription, Azatiwad, is probably related to the toponym *Aspendos*, the name of a city in Pamphylia founded by the Argives according to Strabo (14.4.2). The name of the city is written ΕΣΤΦΕΔΙΙΥΣ (Estwediius) on coins of the 5th century BC. Presumably, it was an earlier Azatiwad, the ancestor of our king, that gave his name to the city. The name does not appear to be Greek of origin (= Luwian "Lover of the Sun God [Wa(n)da]"?^[19]). The ethnicity of Mopsus himself is not clear: The fragmentary Lydian historiographer Xanthus made him a Lydian campaigning in Phoenicia.^[20] If we may believe the transmission of Nicolaus of Damascus who quotes him, Xanthus wrote the name with -ks-, like in the Hittite and Luwian texts; given that Lydian also belongs to the Anatolian language family, it is possible that Xanthus relied on a local non-Greek tradition according to which Mukšuš was a Luwian.

Notes

- [1] Strabo, xiv.4.3; Pausanias, vii.3.2; Pomponius Mela, i.88, and T.J. Scheer, *Mythische Vorväter: zur Bedeutung griechischer Heroenmythen im Selbstverständnis kleinasiatischer Städte*, 1993:164-68, are all noted by Fox 2009:213 note 17.
- [2] In his *scholia* on the poet Lycophron.
- [3] John Tzetzes. *Ad Lycophron*, 427.
- [4] Compare the archaic tradition of the year-king.
- [5] John Tzetzes. *Ad Lycophron*, 440.
- [6] John Tzetzes. *Ad Lycophron*, 980.
- [7] Mallos and Mopsoukrene: Fox 2009:213.
- [8] Fox 2009:212.
- [9] Fox 2009:212.
- [10] The other was Idmon.
- [11] He was shown engaged in boxing on the 7th-century ivory Chest of Cypselus, in Pausanias' description (v.17.10).
- [12] *Argonautica* I, 65-68 and 1502-1536; also Ovid, *Metamorphoses* IV 618- 621; ' Hyginus, *Fabulae* 14, 128, 172.?: John Tzetzes, *Ad Lycophron*, 980.
- [13] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VIII.316.
- [14] *Mopsus regnauit in Cilicia a quo Mopsicrenae et Mopsistae* (i.e. Mopsucrene and Mopsuestia): Eusebius, quoted by Jerome, noted in Fox 2009:215 and note 23.
- [15] Barnett 1953; Hammond 1975: 679-680; Burkert 1992: 52; Finkelberg 2005: 140-159; Jasink & Marino, forthcoming. The Phoenician text has been republished in K. Lawson Younger 1998.
- [16] Theopompus, *FGrH* 115 F 103; Callisthenes, *FGrH* 124 F 32. According to Eusebius, *De laudibus Constantini* 13.5, the Cilicians worshipped Mopsus as a god, possibly as the mythical founder. A statue base of the Roman age found in Sillyum in Pamphylia bears Mopsus' name (ΜΟΨΟΥΤ).
- [17] e.g. Finkelberg 2005: 140-159.
- [18] e.g. Drews 1993: 48-72.
- [19] Barnett 1953.
- [20] Xanthus, *FGrH* 765 F 17.

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Oileus

In Greek mythology, **Oileus** (or **Oïleus** (Οἰλέυς)) was the king of Locris, and an Argonaut.^{[1][2][3]} His father was given as Hodoedocus (whom Oileus succeeded as King of Locris)^[4] and his mother as Agrianome (daughter of Perseon), according to Hyginus's *Fabulae*.^[5]

In Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*, Oileus gets wounded in the shoulder during the attack of the Stymphalian Birds on the *Argo* and receives aid from Eribotes.^[6]


Oileus is best known as the father of Ajax the Lesser.^{[7][8][9]} There is disagreement as to the name of Ajax's mother: Homer names Eriopis as the legal wife of Oileus,^[10] but scholiasts cite other authors, some of whom agreed with Homer in considering Eriopis (or Eriope) the mother of Ajax, but others stated that the mother of Ajax by Oileus was Alcimache, and yet others asserted that Alcimache was simply another name for Eriopis.^[11] John Tzetzes listed three alternate options: Eriopis, Alcimache, or Astyoche the daughter of Itylus.^[12] Oileus was also the father of Medon, who is usually regarded as illegitimate; Medon's mother was said to be a nymph named Rhene,^[13] though some gave Alcimache as his mother.^[14] According to Hyginus, Rhene was the mother of Ajax as well.^[15]

Oileus was also the name of a defender of Troy, the charioteer of Bienor, killed by Agamemnon.^[16]

References

- [1] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 1. 74
 - [2] *Argonautica Orphica*, 191
 - [3] Gaius Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, 1. 372
 - [4] Scholia on *Iliad*, 2. 640
 - [5] Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 14
 - [6] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 2. 1030 ff
 - [7] Homer, *Iliad*, 2. 527
 - [8] *Bibliotheca* 3. 10. 8
 - [9] Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 3. 19. 12–13; 10. 26. 3; 10. 31. 2–3
 - [10] Homer, *Iliad* 13. 697
 - [11] Scholia on *Iliad* 15. 333 & 336
 - [12] Tzetzes, *Homeric Allegories*, Prologue, 543–545
 - [13] Homer, *Iliad*, 2. 727
 - [14] Scholia on *Iliad*, 13. 694
 - [15] Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 97
 - [16] Homer, *Iliad*, 11. 92
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Hephaestus

Hephaestus	
 <p><i>Hephaestus at the Forge by Guillaume Coustou the Younger (Louvre)</i></p>	
God of Fire, Metalworking, Stone masonry, and the Art of Sculpture.	
Abode	Mount Olympus
Symbol	Hammer, Anvil, Tongs, and/or quail
Consort	Aphrodite, Aglaea
Parents	Hera and Zeus, or Hera alone
Siblings	Ares, Eileithyia, Enyo and Hebe
Children	Thalia, Eucleia, Eupheme, Philophrosyne, Palikoi, Kabeiroi, Kabeirides and Euthenia
Roman equivalent	Vulcan

Hephaestus (♂) /hɪˈfiːstəs/, /həˈfɛstəs/ or /hɪˈfɛstəs/; 8 spellings; Ancient Greek Ἥφαιστος *Hēphaistos*) was a Greek god whose Roman equivalent was Vulcan. He is the son of Zeus and Hera, the King and Queen of the Gods - or else, according to some accounts, of Hera alone. He was the god of technology, blacksmiths, craftsmen, artisans, sculptors, metals, metallurgy, fire and volcanoes.^[1]

Like other mythic smiths but unlike most other gods, Hephaestus was lame, which gave him a grotesque appearance in Greek eyes. He served as the blacksmith of the gods, and he was worshipped in the manufacturing and industrial centres of Greece, particularly in Athens. The center of his cult was in Lemnos.^[2] Hephaestus's symbols are a smith's hammer, an anvil and a pair of tongs.

Epithets

Hephaestus is given many epithets, some of which include:^[3]

- **Ἀμφιγύεις** “the lame one” (ἀμφιγύεις)
- **Κυλλοπόδιον** “the halting” (κυλλοποδίων)
- **Χαλκεύς** “coppersmith” (χαλκεύς)
- **Κλυτοτέχνης** “renowned artificer” (κλυτοτέχνης)
- **Πολύμητις** “shrewd, crafty” or “of many devices” (πολύμητις)
- **Aetnaeus**, owing to his workshop supposedly being located below Mount Aetna.^[4]

Mythology

The craft of Hephaestus

Hephaestus had his own palace on Olympus: it contained his workshop replete with an anvil and twenty bellows, which worked at his bidding. (Il. xviii. 370, &c.) Hephaestus crafted much of the magnificent equipment of the gods, and almost any finely-wrought metalwork imbued with powers that appears in Greek myth is said to have been forged by Hephaestus: Hermes' winged helmet and sandals, the Aegis breastplate, Aphrodite's famed girdle, Agamemnon's staff of office,^[5] Achilles' armor, Heracles' bronze clappers, Helios' chariot as well as his own due to his lameness, the shoulder of Pelops, Eros' bow and arrows. In later accounts, Hephaestus worked with the help of the chthonic Cyclopes, his assistants in the forge, Brontes, Steropes and Pyracmon among them.^[6] (Virg. Aen. viii. 416, &c.)

He also built automatons of metal to work for him. This included tripods that walked to and from Mount Olympus. He gave to blinded Orion his apprentice Cedalion as a guide. In one version of the myth, Prometheus stole the fire that he gave to man from Hephaestus's forge. Hephaestus also created the gift that the gods gave to man, the woman Pandora and her pithos. Being a skilled blacksmith, Hephaestus created all the thrones in the Palace of Olympus.^[7]

Parentage

In the mainstream tradition, clearly attested in Homer's *Odyssey* and perhaps also in the *Iliad* (and supported by Attic vase paintings), Hephaestus was born of the union of Zeus and Hera.^[8] In another tradition, attested by Hesiod, Hera bore Hephaestus alone.^[9] This clashes with the common story where Hephaestus split the head of Zeus, for Hephaestus is there represented as older than Athena.

Fall from Olympus

According to one version, Hera threw Hephaestus down from the heavens because he was "shrivelled of foot". He fell into the ocean and was brought up by Thetis (mother of Achilles) and the Oceanid Eurynome.^[10]

In another account, Hephaestus, attempting to rescue his mother from Zeus, was flung down by Zeus. He fell for an entire day and landed on the island of Lemnos, where he was cared for and taught to be a master craftsman by the Sintians, an ancient tribe native to that island.^[11] (Hom. Il. i. 590, &c. Val. Flacc. ii. 8.5; Apollod. i. 3. § 5, who, however, confounds the two occasions on which Hephaestus was thrown from Olympus.) Later writers describe his lameness as the consequence of his second fall, while Homer makes him lame and weak from his birth.



Vulcan (Roman counterpart of Hephaestus) by Peter Paul Rubens.

Return to Olympus

Hephaestus was the only Olympian said to have returned to Olympus after being exiled.

In an archaic story,^[12] Hephaestus gained revenge against Hera for rejecting him by making her a magical golden throne, which, when she sat on it, did not allow her to leave it.^[13] The other gods begged Hephaestus to return to Olympus to let her go, but he refused, saying "I have no mother".^[14]

At last Dionysus, sent to fetch him, shared his wine, intoxicating the smith, and took him back to Olympus on the back of a mule accompanied by revelers, a scene that sometimes appears on painted pottery of Attica and in Corinth,^[15] as well. In the painted scenes the padded dancers and phallic figures of the Dionysan throng leading the mule show that the procession was a part of the dithyrambic celebrations that were the forerunners, in Athens, of the satyr plays of the fifth century.^[16]

The theme of the *return of Hephaestus*, popular among the Attic vase-painters whose wares were favored among the Etruscans, may have carried this theme to Etruria.^[17] As vase-painters portrayed the procession, Hephaestus was mounted on a mule or a horse, accompanied by Dionysus, who held the bridle and carried Hephaestus' tools, which include a double-headed axe.

The traveller Pausanias reported seeing a painting in the temple of Dionysus in Athens, which had been built in the 5th century but may have been decorated at any time before the 2nd century CE, when Pausanias saw it:

"There are paintings here – Dionysus bringing Hephaestus up to heaven. One of the Greek legends is that Hephaestus, when he was born, was thrown down by Hera. In revenge he sent as a gift a golden chair with invisible fetters. When Hera sat down she was held fast, and Hephaestus refused to listen to any other of the gods save Dionysus – in him he reposed the fullest trust – and after making him drunk Dionysus brought him to heaven."^[18]

Consorts and children

According to most versions, Hephaestus's consort is Aphrodite, who cheats on him with a number of gods and mortals, including the god Ares. However, in Homer's *Iliad*, the consort of Hephaestus is a lesser Aphrodite, Charis "the grace" or Aglaia "the glorious", the youngest of the Graces, as Hesiod calls her.^[19]

There is a Temple of Hephaestus in Athens, the *Hephaesteum* (miscalled the "Theseum"), located near the agora, or marketplace. An Athenian founding myth tells that the city's patron goddess, Athena, refused a union with Hephaestus because of his unsightly appearance and crippled nature, and that when he became angry and forceful with her, she disappeared from the bed. His ejaculate fell on the earth, impregnating Gaia, who subsequently gave birth to Erichthonius of Athens;^[20] then the surrogate mother gave the child to Athena to foster, guarded by a serpent.

On the island of Lemnos, his consort was the sea nymph Cabeiro, by whom he was the father of two metalworking gods named the Cabeiri.

In Sicily, his consort was the nymph Aetna, and his sons two gods of Sicilian geysers called Palici. With Thalia, Hephaestus was sometimes considered the father of the Palici.

Hephaestus fathered several children with mortals and immortals alike. One of those children was the robber Periphetes.



The western face of the Doric temple of Hephaestus, Agora of Athens.

This is the full list of his consorts and children according to the various accounts:

1. Aphrodite
2. Aglaea
 1. Eucleia
 2. Euthenia
 3. Eupheme
 4. Philophrosyne
3. Aetna
 1. The Palici
4. Cabeiro
 1. The Cabeiri
5. Gaia
 1. Erichthonius
6. Anticleia
 1. Periphetes
7. by unknown mothers
 1. Ardalus
 2. Cercyon (possibly)
 3. Olenus
 4. Palaemonius, Argonaut
 5. Philottus
 6. Pylus
 7. Spinter

In addition, the Romans claim their equivalent god, Vulcan, to have produced the following children:

1. Cacus
2. Caeculus

Hephaestus and Aphrodite

Hephaestus, being the most unfaltering of the gods, was given Aphrodite's hand in marriage by Zeus in order to prevent conflict over her between the other gods.

Hephaestus and Aphrodite had an arranged marriage and Aphrodite, disliking the idea of being married to unsightly Hephaestus, began an affair with Ares, the god of war. Eventually, Hephaestus found out about Aphrodite's promiscuity from Helios, the all-seeing Sun, and planned a trap for them during one of their trysts. While Aphrodite and Ares lay together in bed, Hephaestus ensnared them in an unbreakable chain-link net so small as to be invisible and dragged them to Mount Olympus to shame them in front of the other gods for retribution.

However, the gods laughed at the sight of these naked lovers and Poseidon persuaded Hephaestus to free them in return for a guarantee that Ares would pay the adulterer's fine. Hephaestus states in *the Odyssey* that he would return Aphrodite to her father and demand back his bride price: this is the one episode that links them.

The Thebans told that the union of Ares and Aphrodite produced Harmonia, as lovely as a second Aphrodite. But of the union of Hephaestus with Aphrodite, there was no issue, unless Virgil was serious when he said that Eros was their child.^[21] Later authors might explain this statement when they say the love-god was sired by Ares but passed off to Hephaestus as his own son.

Hephaestus was somehow connected with the archaic, pre-Greek Phrygian and Thracian mystery cult of the Kabeiroi, who were also called the *Hephaistoi*, "the Hephaestus-men," in Lemnos. One of the three Lemnian tribes

also called themselves Hephaestion and claimed direct descent from the god.

Hephaestus and Athena

Hephaestus is to the male gods as Athena is to the females, for he gives skill to mortal artists and was believed to have taught men the arts alongside Athena. (Od. vi. 233, xxiii. 160. Hymn. in Vulc. 2. &c.) He was nevertheless believed to be far inferior to the sublime character of Athena. At Athens they had temples and festivals in common. (See Dict of Ant. s. v. Hêphaisteia, Chalkeia.) Both were believed to have great healing powers, and Lemnian earth (terra Lemnia) from the spot on which Hephaestus had fallen was believed to cure madness, the bites of snakes, and haemorrhage, and priests of Hephaestus knew how to cure wounds inflicted by snakes. (Philostr. Heroic. v. 2; Eustath. ad Hom. p. 330; Dict. Cret. ii. 14.)

He was represented in the temple of Athena Chalcoecus (Athena of the Bronze House^[22]) at Sparta, in the act of delivering his mother (Paus. iii. 17. § 3); on the chest of Cypselus, giving Achilles's armour to Thetis (v. 19. § 2); and at Athens there was the famous statue of Hephaestus by Alcamenes, in which his lameness was only subtly portrayed. (Cic. de Nat. Deor. i. 30; Val. Max. viii. 11. § 3.) The Greeks frequently placed small dwarf-like statues of Hephaestus near their hearths, and these figures are the oldest of all his representations. (Herod. iii. 37; Aristoph. Av. 436; Callim. Hymn. in Dian. 60.) During the best period of Grecian art he was represented as a vigorous man with a beard, and is characterised by his hammer or some other crafting tool, his oval cap, and the Chiton (costume).

Volcano god

Hephaestus was identified by Greek colonists in southern Italy with the volcano gods Adranus (of Mount Etna) and Vulcanus of the Lipari islands. His forge was moved to the Lipari by the poets. The first-century sage Apollonius of Tyana is said to have observed, "there are many other mountains all over the earth that are on fire, and yet we should never be done with it if we assigned to them giants and gods like Hephaestus".^[23]

Miscellanea

In the Trojan war he sided with the Greeks, but he was also worshipped by the Trojans and saved one of their men from being killed by Diomedes. (Il. v. 9, &c.)

His favourite place in the mortal world was the island of Lemnos, where he liked to dwell among the Sintians (Od. viii. 283, &c., Il. i. 593; Ov Fast. viii. 82), but he also frequented other volcanic islands such as Lipara, Hiera, Imbros and Sicily, which are called his abodes or workshops. (Apollon. Rhod. iii. 41; Callim. Hymn. in Dian. 47; Serv. ad Aen. viii. 416; Strab. p. 275; Plin. H. N. iii. 9; Val. Flacc. ii. 96.)

The epithets and surnames by which Hephaestus is designated by the poets generally allude to his skill in the plastic arts or to his figure and his lameness.

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Symbolism

Hephaestus was reported in myth as *cholōs*, "lame", and *ēpedanos*, "halting".^[24] He was depicted with crippled feet, and misshapen, either from birth or as a result of his fall from Olympus. In vase-paintings, Hephaestus is usually shown lame and bent over his anvil, hard at work on a metal creation, his feet sometimes back-to-front: *Hephaistos amphigyēis*. He walked with the aid of a stick. The Argonaut Palaimonius, "son of Hephaestus" (i.e. a bronze-smith) was also lame.^[25]

Other "sons of Hephaestus" were the Cabeiri on the island of Samothrace; they were identified with the crab (*karkinos*) by the lexicographer Hesychius, and the adjective *karkinopous* ("crab-footed") signified "lame", according to Detienne and Vernant.^[26] The Cabeiri were seen as lame too.

In some myths, Hephaestus built himself a "wheeled chair" or chariot with which to move around, thus helping him overcome his lameness while showing the other gods his skill.^[27] In Homer's *Iliad* it is said that Hephaestus built some bronze human machines to help him get around.

Hephaestus's ugly appearance and lameness is taken by some to represent arsenicosis, an effect of low levels of arsenic exposure that would result in lameness and skin cancers. In place of less easily available tin, arsenic was added to copper in the Bronze Age to harden it; like the hatters, crazed by their exposure to mercury, who inspired Lewis Carroll's famous character of the Mad Hatter, most smiths of the Bronze Age would have suffered from chronic poisoning as a result of their livelihood. Consequently, the mythic image of the lame smith is widespread.^[28]

Comparative mythology

Parallels in other mythological systems for Hephaestus's symbolism include the following:

- In Ugarit, the craftsman-god Kothar Hasis is identified from afar by his distinctive walk, possibly suggesting that he limps.^[29]
- In Egypt, Herodotus was given to understand, the craftsman-god Ptah was a dwarf.^[30]
- In Norse mythology there was the lame bronzeworker Weyland the Smith.

Minor planet

The minor planet 2212 Hephaistos discovered in 1978 by Soviet astronomer Lyudmila Chernykh is named in his honor.^[31]

Notes

- [1] Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* 1985: III.2.ii; see coverage of Lemnos-based traditions and legends at Mythic Lemnos
- [2] Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* 1985: III.2.ii; see coverage of Lemnos-based traditions and legends at Mythic Lemnos
- [3] Autenrieth, Georg (1891). *A Homeric Dictionary for Schools and Colleges*. United States of America: Harper and Brothers.
- [4] Aelian, *Hist. An.* xi. 3, referenced under Aetnaeus (<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/ac13129.0001.001/69?page=root;size=100;view=image>) in William Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology
- [5] its provenance recounted in *Iliad* II
- [6] Graves, Robert (1960). "The Palace of Olympus". *Greek Gods and Heroes*. United States of America: Dell Laurel-Leaf. pp. 150.
- [7] Graves, Robert (1960). "The Palace of Olympus". *Greek Gods and Heroes*. United States of America: Dell Laurel-Leaf. pp. 150.
- [8] In Homer, *Odyssey* viii. 312 Hephaestus addresses "Father Zeus"; cf. Homer, *Iliad* i. 578 (some scholars, such as Gantz, note that Hephaestus' reference to Zeus as 'father' here may be a general title), xiv. 338, xviii. 396, xxi. 332. See also Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 3.22.
- [9] Hesiod, *Theogony* 924ff. In Hesiod's Zeus-centered cosmology, Hera gave birth to Hephaestus in order to get back at Zeus for his asexual birthing of Athena. Several late texts also attest this, e.g. *Bibliothèque* i. 3.5 (consciously contradicting Homer); Hyginus, Preface to *Fabulae*. However, Attic vase-painters illustrated the mainstream tradition that Hephaestus was present at the birth of Athena, seen to be wielding the axe with which he had split Zeus' head to free her.
- [10] *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 316–321 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0138:hymn=3:card=305>); Homer, *Iliad* 395–405 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0134:book=18:card=388>).
- [11] Homer, *Iliad* 1.590–594 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0134:book=1:card=568>)
- [12] Features within the narrative suggest its archaic nature to Kerenyi and others; the fullest literary account, however, is a late one, in the Roman rhetorician Libanios, according to Guy Hedreen, "The Return of Hephaistos, Dionysiac Processional Ritual and the Creation of a Visual Narrative" *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* **124** (2004:38–64) p. 38 and note.
- [13] A section "The Binding of Hera" is devoted to this archaic theme in Karl Kerényi, *The Gods of the Greeks* (1951, pp 156–58) who refers to this "ancient story", which is one of the "tales of guileful deeds performed by cunning gods, mostly at a time when they had not joined the family on Olympus".
- [14] Kerényi 1951:157.
- [15] Axel Seeberg, "Hephaistos Rides Again" *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* **85** (1965), pp. 102–109, describes and illustrates four pieces of Corinthian painted pottery with the theme; a black red-figure calpis in the collection of Marsden J. Perry was painted with the return of

- Hephaestus (L. G. Eldridge, "An Unpublished Calpis", *American Journal of Archaeology* 21.1 (January - March 1917:38-54).
- [16] The significance of the subject for the pre-history of Greek drama is argued by T.B.L. Webster, "Some thoughts on the pre-history of Greek drama", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 5 ((1958) pp 43ff; more recently, see Guy Hedreen 2004:38-64.
- [17] The return of Hephaestus was painted on the Etruscan tomb at the "Grotta Campana" near Veii (identified by Petersen, *Über die älteste etruskische Wandmalerei* (Rome, 1902) pp 149ff; the "well-known subject" was doubted in this instance by A. M. Harmon, "The Paintings of the Grotta Campana", *American Journal of Archaeology* 16.1 (January - March 1912):1-10);
- [18] Pausanias, 1.20.3.
- [19] Hesiod, *Theogony* 945
- [20] Hyginus made an imaginative etymology for *Erichthonius*, of strife (*Eris*) between Athena and Hephaestus and the Earth-child (*chthonios*).
- [21] *Aeneid* i.664
- [22] The Museum of Goddess Athena, Sanctuary of Athena Chalkiokos at Sparta (<http://www.goddess-athena.org/Museum/Temples/Sparta/index.htm>)
- [23] *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, book v.16.
- [24] *Odyssey* 8.308 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hom.+Od.+8.308>); *Iliad* 18.397 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hom.+Il.+18.397>), etc.
- [25] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* i.204.
- [26] Detienne, Marcel; Vernant, Jean-Pierre (1978). *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press. pp. 269–272. ISBN 0-391-00740-8. Cited by Silver, Morris (1992). *Taking Ancient Mythology Economically*. New York: Brill. p. 35 note 5. ISBN 90-04-09706-6.
- [27] Dolmage, Jay (2006). "'Breathe Upon Us an Even Flame': Hephaestus, History, and the Body of Rhetoric". *Rhetoric Review* 25 (2): 119–140 [p. 120]. doi:10.1207/s15327981rr2502_1.
- [28] Saggs, H. W. F. (1989). *Civilization Before Greece and Rome*. New Haven: Yale University Press. pp. 200–201. ISBN 0-300-04440-2.
- [29] Baruch Margalit, *Aqhat Epic* 1989:289.
- [30] Herodotus, iii.36.
- [31] Schmadel, Lutz D. (2003). *Dictionary of Minor Planet Names* (<http://books.google.com/books?q=2212+Hephaistos+SB+1978+5849>) (5th ed.). New York: Springer Verlag. pp. 180. ISBN 3-540-00238-3. .

External links

- Theoi Project, Hephaestus (<http://www.theoi.com/Olympios/Hephaistos.html>) in classical literature and art
- Greek Mythology Link, Hephaestus (<http://www.maicar.com/GML/Hephaestus.html>) summary of the myths of Hephaestus

Peleus

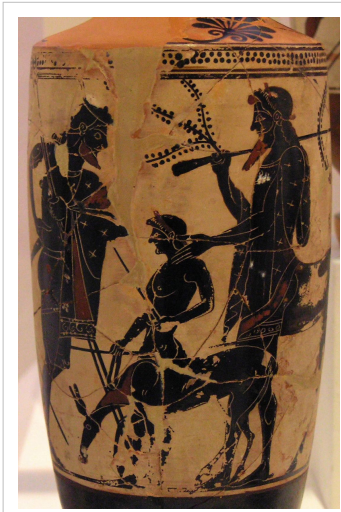
In Greek mythology, **Peleus** (♂ /ˈpɛl.juːs/; Greek: Πηλεΰς, *Pēleus*) was a hero whose myth was already known to the hearers of Homer in the late 8th century BC.^[1] Peleus was the son of Aeacus, king of the island of Aegina,^[2] and Endeïs, the oread of Mount Pelion in Thessaly;^[3] he was the father of Achilles. He and his brother Telamon were friends of Heracles, serving in his expedition against the Amazons, his war against King Laomedon, and with him in the quest for the Golden Fleece. Though there were no further kings in Aegina, the kings of Epirus claimed descent from Peleus in the historic period.^[4]

Life myth

Peleus and his brother Telamon killed their half-brother Phocus, perhaps in a hunting accident and certainly in an unthinking moment,^[5] and fled Aegina to escape punishment. In Phthia, Peleus was purified by Eurytion and married Antigone, Eurytion's daughter, by whom he had a daughter, Polydora. Eurytion received the barest mention among the Argonauts, where Peleus and Telamon were also present, "yet not together, nor from one place, for they dwelt far apart and distant from Aigina;"^[6] but Peleus accidentally killed Eurytion during the hunt for the Calydonian Boar and fled from Phthia.

Peleus was purified of the murder of Eurytion in Iolcus by Acastus. Astydameia, Acastus' wife, fell in love with Peleus but he scorned her. Bitter, she sent a messenger to Antigone to tell her that Peleus was to marry Acastus' daughter. As a result, Antigone hanged herself.

Astydamia then told Acastus that Peleus had tried to rape her. Acastus took Peleus on a hunting trip and hid his sword then abandoned him right before a group of centaurs attacked. Chiron, the wise centaur, or, according to another source, Hermes, returned Peleus' sword with magical powers and Peleus managed to escape.^[7] He pillaged Iolcus and dismembered Astydameia, then marched his army between the rended limbs. Acastus and Astydamia were dead and the kingdom fell to Jason's son, Thessalus.



Peleus consigns Achilles to Chiron's care, white-ground lekythos by the Edinburgh Painter, ca. 500 BC, (National Archaeological Museum of Athens)

Marriage to Thetis

After Antigone's death, Peleus married the sea-nymph Thetis. He was able to win her with the aid of Proteus, who told Peleus how to overcome Thetis' ability to change her form.^[8] Their wedding feast was attended by many of the Olympian gods. As a wedding present, Poseidon gave Peleus two immortal horses: Balius and Xanthus. During the feast, Eris produced the Apple of Discord, which started the quarrel that led to the Judgement of Paris and eventually to the Trojan War. The marriage of Peleus and Thetis produced a son, Achilles.

Peleus' son Achilles

Thetis attempted to render her son Achilles invulnerable. In a familiar version, she dipped him in the River Styx, holding him by one heel, which remained vulnerable. In an early and less popular version of the story, Thetis anointed the boy in ambrosia and put him on top of a fire to burn away the mortal parts of his body. She was interrupted by Peleus and she abandoned both father and son in a rage, leaving his heel vulnerable. A nearly identical story is told by Plutarch, in his *On Isis and Osiris*, of the goddess Isis burning away the mortality of Prince Maneros of Byblos, son of Queen Astarte, and being likewise interrupted before completing the process.

Peleus gave Achilles to the centaur Chiron, to raise on Mt. Pelion, which took its name from Peleus.

In the *Iliad*, Achilles uses Peleus' immortal horses and also wields his father's spear.

Peleus in hero-cult

Though the tomb of Aeacus remained in a shrine enclosure in the most conspicuous part of the port city, a quadrangular enclosure of white marble sculpted with bas-reliefs, in the form in which Pausanias saw it, with the tumulus of Phocus nearby,^[9] there was no *temenos* of Peleus at Aegina. Two versions of Peleus' fate account for this; in Euripides' *Troades*, Acastus, son of Pelias, has exiled him from Phthia;^[10] and subsequently he died in exile; in another, he was reunited with Thetis and made immortal.

In antiquity, according to a fragment of Callimachus' lost *Aitia*,^[11] there was a tomb of Peleus in Ikos (modern Alonissos), an island of the northern Sporades; there Peleus was venerated as "king of the Myrmidons" and the "return of the hero" was celebrated annually.^[12] And there was his tomb, according to a poem in the Greek Anthology.^[13]

The only other reference to veneration of Peleus comes from the Christian Clement of Alexandria, in his polemical *Exhortation to the Greeks*. Clement attributes his source to a "collection of marvels" by a certain "Monimos" of whom nothing is known, and claims, in pursuit of his thesis that *daimon*-worshippers become as cruel as their gods, that in "Pella of Thessaly human sacrifice is offered to Peleus and Cheiron, the victim being an Achaean".^[14] Of this, the continuing association of Peleus and Chiron is the most dependable detail.^[15]



Peleus makes off with his prize bride Thetis, who has vainly assumed animal forms to escape him: Boeotian black-figure dish, ca. 500 BC–475 BC

Peleus in Athenian tragedy

A *Peleus* by Sophocles is lost. He appears as a character in Euripides' tragedy *Andromache* (c. 425 BC).

Notes

- [1] Peleus is mentioned in Homer's *Odyssey* during the conversation between Odysseus and the dead Achilles.
- [2] The island lies in the Saronic Gulf opposite the coast of Epidaurus; it had once been called Oenone, Pausanias was informed.
- [3] In poetry he and Telamon are sometimes the *Endeides*, the "sons of Endeis"; see, for example, Pausanias 2.29.10.
- [4] Pausanias, 2.29.4.
- [5] "A witless moment" (Apollonius, *Argonautica*, I. 93,
- [6] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* I.90-93, in Peter Green's translation (2007:45).
- [7] Aristophanes, *The Clouds*, 1063-1067.
- [8] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XI 219-74.
- [9] Pausanias, 2.29.6-7
- [10] Scholia on Euripides, *Troades* 1123-28 note that in some accounts the *sons* of Acastus have cast him out, and that he was received by Molon in his exile
- [11] One of the fragmentary Oxyrhynchus papyri, noted by Lewis Richard Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality: the Gifford Lectures*, "The Cults of Epic Heroes: Peleus" 1921:310f.
- [12] Farnell 1921:310f; Farnell remarks on "some ethnic tradition that escapes us, but which led the inhabitants to attach the name of Peleus to some forgotten grave," so deep was the cultural discontinuity between Mycenaean Greece and the rise of hero-cults in the 8th century BC.
- [13] Greek Anthology, 7.2.
- [14] George William Butterworth, ed. and tr. *Clement of Alexandria*, "Exhortation to the Greeks" 1919:93.
- [15] By way of apology for Clement, Farnell suggests "human sacrifice was occasionally an adjunct of hero-cults, and this at Pella may have been an exceptional rite prescribed at a crisis by some later oracle." (Farnell 1921:311). Dennis D. Hughes, *Human Sacrifice in Ancient Greece* (Routledge, 1991) offers a skeptical view of the actuality of human sacrifices during historical times.

References

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- Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* IV,805- 879
- Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII, 299-381.
- Homer, *Iliad* XVIII, 78-87;
- Catullus, Poem 64
- Euripides, *Andromache*.

Philoctetes

Philoctetes (Greek: Φιλοκτήτης, *Philoctētēs*; English pronunciation: [ⓘ] [Ⓘ] /ˌfɪləkˈtiːtiːz/, stressed on the third syllable, -*tet*-^[1]), or **Philocthetes**, was, according to Greek mythology, the son of King Poeas of Meliboea in Thessaly. He was a Greek hero, famed as an archer, and was a participant in the Trojan War. He was the subject of at least two plays by Sophocles, one of which is named after him, and one each by both Aeschylus and Euripides. However, only one Sophoclean play survives—Aeschylus' *Philoctetes*, Euripides' *Philoctetes* and Sophocles *Philoctetes at Troy* are all lost except for some fragments. He is also mentioned in Homer's *Iliad*; Book 2 describes his exile on the island of Lemnos, his wound by snake-bite, and his eventual recall by the Greeks. The recall of Philoctetes is told in the lost epic *Little Iliad*, where his retrieval was accomplished by Odysseus and Diomedes. Philoctetes killed three men at Troy.^[2]



Philoctetes

The stories

Philoctetes was the son of King Poeas of the city of Meliboea in Thessaly. He was considered one of the lovers of the hero Heracles, and when Heracles wore the shirt of Nessus and built his funeral pyre, no one would light it for him except for Philoctetes or in other versions his father Poeas. This gained him the favor of the newly deified Heracles. Because of this, Philoctetes or Poeas is given Heracles' bow and poisoned arrows.

Philoctetes was one of the many eligible Greeks who competed for the hand of Helen, the Spartan princess; according to legend, she was the most beautiful woman in the world. As such, he was required to participate in the conflict to reclaim her for Menelaus in the Trojan War. Philoctetes was stranded on the Island of Lemnos or Chryse by the Greeks on the way to Troy. There are at least four separate tales about what happened to strand Philoctetes on his journey to Troy, but all indicate that he received a wound on his foot that festered and had a terrible smell. One version holds that Philoctetes was bitten by a snake that Hera sent to molest him as punishment for his or his father's service to Heracles. Another tradition says that the Greeks forced Philoctetes to show them where Heracles's ashes were deposited. Philoctetes would not break his oath by speech, so he went to the spot and placed his foot upon the site. Immediately, he was injured in the foot that touched the soil over the ashes. Yet another tradition has it that when the Achaeans, en route to Troy at the beginning of the war, came to the island of Tenedos, Achilles angered Apollo by killing King Tenes, allegedly the god's son. When, in expiation, the Achaeans offered a sacrifice to Apollo, a snake came out from the altar and bit Philoctetes. Finally, it is said that Philoctetes received his terrible wound on the island of Chryse, when he unknowingly trespassed into the shrine of the nymph after whom the island was named (this is the version in the extant play by Sophocles). A modern interpretation of the cause of his wound is that he was scratched by a poisoned arrow. Commonly tips of arrows were poisoned with a combination of fermented viper venom, blood or plasma, and feces. Even a scratch would result in death, sometimes drawn out. A person who survives would do so with a festering wound.^[3]

Regardless of the cause of the wound, Philoctetes was exiled by the Greeks and was angry at the treatment he received from Odysseus, King of Ithaca, who had advised the Atreidae to strand him. Medôn took control of

Philoctetes' men, and Philoctetes himself remained on Lemnos, alone, for ten years.

Helenus, the prophetic son of King Priam of Troy, was forced to reveal, under torture, that one of the conditions of the Greeks' winning the war was that they needed the bow and arrows of Heracles. Upon hearing this, Odysseus and a group of men (usually including Diomedes) rushed back to Lemnos to recover Heracles' weapons. (As Sophocles writes it in his play named *Philoctetes*, Odysseus is accompanied by Neoptolemus, Achilles' son, also known as Pyrrhus. Other versions of the myth don't include Neoptolemus.) Surprised to find the archer alive, the Greeks balked on what to do next. Odysseus tricked the weaponry away from Philoctetes, but Diomedes refused to take the weapons without the man. Heracles, who had become a god many years earlier, came down from Olympus and told Philoctetes to

go and that he would be healed by the son of Asclepius and win great honor as a hero of the Achaean army. Once back in military company outside Troy, they employed either Machaon the surgeon (who may have been killed by Eurypylos of Mysia, son of Telephus, depending on the account) or more likely Podalirius the physician, both sons of the immortal physician Asclepius, to heal his wound permanently. Philoctetes challenged and would have killed Paris, son of Priam, in single combat were it not for the debates over future Greek strategy. In one telling it was Philoctetes that killed Paris, he fired four times, the first arrow went wide, the second struck his bow hand, the third hit him in the right eye, the fourth hit him in the heel, there was no need of a fifth shot. Philoctetes sided with Neoptolemus about continuing to try to storm the city. They were the only two to think so because they had not had the war-weariness of the prior ten years. Afterward, Philoctetes was among those chosen to hide inside the Trojan Horse, and during the sack of the city he killed many famed Trojans.

After the war, he returned home to Meliboea, where he found a revolt. From there he went to Italy where he founded the towns of Petilia and Crimissa in Calabria and established the Bruttii. He also aided Sicilian Greeks. When he died, he was buried next to the Sybaris River.

Modern literature

Drama

- The legend of Philoctetes was used by André Gide in his play *Philoctète*.
- The East German postmodern dramatist Heiner Müller produced a successful adaptation of Sophocles' play in 1968 in Munich. It became one of his most-performed plays.
- Philoctetes appears in Seamus Heaney's play *The Cure at Troy*, a "version" of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*.
- John Jesurun wrote the *Philoctetes-variations* in 1993 on Ron Vawter's request, it was the actor's last piece of work, considered his artistic testament, being performed while the actor was dying of AIDS. The play has consequently also become a metaphor for AIDS, with Philoctetes as a plagued outcast.



Marble Slab with the Recall of Philoctetes -
Archeological Museum of Brauron

Poetry

- The myth of Philoctetes is the inspiration for William Wordsworth's sonnet "When Philoctetes in the Lemnian Isle," though here the thematic focus is not the Greek warrior's magical bow or gruesome injury, but his abandonment. The poem is about the companionship and solace provided by Nature when all human society has been withdrawn.
- Philoctetes being retrieved by Neoptolemus is the subject of the Greek poet Yannis Ritsos' long poem "Philoctetes" (1963–1965), a monologue in which the youth Neoptolemus convinces Philoctetes to follow him back to the war that will be won by the ruse of the Trojan Horse. Disguise and seeming are the subject of the poem:

"No one will comprehend your freedom's unmarred joy / or be frightened by it ever. The mask of action,
/ which I have brought you hidden in my pack, will conceal / your remote, transparent face. Put it on.
Let's be going."

(Translated by Peter Bien)

- Philoctetes appears as a character in two Michael Ondaatje poems, entitled "The Goodnight" and "Philoctetes On The Island." Both appear in his 1979 book, *There's a trick with a knife I'm learning to do*.
- Derek Walcott's modern Caribbean epic, *Omeros*, includes a character named Philoctete; he receives a wound and clearly alludes to the Greek narrative.
- Philoctetes is mentioned in Poem VIII of "21 Love Poems" by Adrienne Rich:

"I can see myself years back at Sunion, hurting with an inflated foot, Philoctetes in woman's form,
limping the long path, lying on a headland over the dark sea, looking down the red rocks to where a
soundless curl of white told me a wave had struck, imagining the pull of that water from that height,
knowing deliberate suicide wasn't my metier, yet all the time nursing, measuring that wound."

Chapter 11 of Ursula Krechel's long poem *Stimmen aus dem harten Kern* (2005) focuses on Philoctetes. (Bilingual edition *Voices from the Bitter Core*, trans. Amy Kepple Strawser 2010.)

The Odyssey

Novels

- The legend of Philoctetes was, in part, the inspiration for Robert Silverberg's science fiction novel *The Man in the Maze*.
- In the novel, *The Division Of The Spoils*, the last part of *The Raj Quartet* by Paul Scott, filmed as the TV series *The Jewel In The Crown* in 1984, "Philoctetes" is used as his pen name by Hari Kumar for his articles in the *Ranpur Gazette*.
- In Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano*, Hugh Firmin escapes his British upbringing by enlisting as a sailor on the ship *Philoctetes*.
- In the 1998 novel *Sirena* by Donna Jo Napoli, Philoctetes is included as a main character. The book focuses on the title character Sirena, a mermaid who falls in love with Philoctetes, during his stay on Lemnos. The main conflict of the book is overcoming the differences between species, and the differences in longevity, by his love she gains immortality. and Sirena's doubts of whether his love is true or a result of her enchanted song. She cared for him and tended to his wounds, caused by a serpent of Hera. They would heal during the day, and return at night. In the novel it is Achilles's son, Neoptolemus, who refuses to leave Philoctetes behind, but after having them returned, he leaves a single arrow with her, and returns to Greece.
- Mark Merlis features a version of Philoctetes in his 1998 AIDS-themed novel *An Arrow's Flight*.
- Philoctetes makes several appearances in the 2007 French novel/collection of linked short stories *La chaussure sur le toit* by Vincent Delecroix. In 'L'élément tragique', Philoctète is a character who has been abandoned with a weapon and a festering leg wound on the roof of Parisian apartment building; a Ulysse and a young Néoptolème

are also part of the story. In another related story, 'Caractère de chien', a dog narrates the story of his master, a writer so obsessed with the story of Philoctète and overcome by the notion of abandonment that it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Cinema

- Philoctetes makes an appearance in the 1997 animated movie *Hercules*. In it, Philoctetes (usually referred to simply as "**Phil**") is a satyr and Hercules' trainer. He is voiced by Danny DeVito.

Television

- The *Torchwood* episode "Greeks Bearing Gifts" has the alien serial-killer Mary (played by Daniella Denby-Ashe) refer to herself as Philoctetes, in reference to his exile on Lemnos. She was transported to Earth for crimes which she described as "political" but her testimony is probably untrustworthy. Unlike classical Philoctetes, she is not recalled to her home but, rather, consigned by Captain Jack to the center of the Sun.

Essays

- Sophocles' play forms the basis of an essay by Edmund Wilson *The Wound and the Bow*, in the book of the same name.

Modern art

Painting

- "Philoctetes on the Island of Lemnos" by James Barry, 1770, now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna (Image ^[4]).
- "The Wounded Philoctetes" by Nikolaj Abraham Abildgaard, 1775, now in the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen, which is also used as the front cover for the Penguin Classics edition of the novel, *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley. (Image ^[5]).
- "Philoctetes on Lemnos" by Jean Germain Drouais, 1788, now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Chartres (Image ^[6]).
- "Dying Philoctetes" by Vincenzo Baldacci, 1807, now in the Pinacoteca Comunale in Cesena (Image ^[7]).

Sculpture

- "Wounded Philoctetes" by Herman Wilhelm Bissen, now in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen (Image ^[7]).

References

- [1] John C. Wells, *Longman pronunciation dictionary*, 3rd edition (2008), entry *Philoctetes*.
- [2] Hyginus, "Fabulae" 114.
- [3] http://books.google.com/books?id=M_v57ETfcvQC&pg=PT71&lpg=PT71&dq=steppe+viper+venom&source=bl&ots=wfiIkIIJ7G&sig=dWAulk6T8IAIlerH6PNQHschncE&hl=en&sa=X&ei=YRgVUNOaCZSM6QGN74GYBw&ved=0CE0Q6AEwBTgK#v=onepage&q=steppe%20viper%20venom&f=false
- [4] http://www.pinacotecabologna.it/immagini_opere/415_img_big.jpg
- [5] http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/fnart/art/19th/painting/abildgaard1.jpg
- [6] <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/81/Philoctetes.jpg>
- [7] <http://www.artandarchitecture.org.uk/images/conway/62114807.html>

Phrontis

Phrontis (Greek **Φρόντις**) was one of four (or five) sons of Phrixus and Chalciope. He was also a grandson of King Aeëtes of Colchis .

Phrontis and his brothers were raised in Colchis, but after their father died, he and his brothers set out to avenge their father's ill treatment in the hands of king Athamas of Orchomenus and were stranded on the Island of Ares the War God in the Black Sea until they were rescued from the island by the Jason and the Argonauts. Once Jason received discovered that Phrontis and his brothers were grandsons of King Aeëtes of Colchis, Jason convinced Phrontis and his brothers to return with him to Colchis and help him to obtain the Golden Fleece. Jason also questioned Phrontis and his brothers on the layout and security of the land. After the Fleece was retrieved from Colchis, Phrontis and his brothers returned with the Argo's crew to Greece. His brothers were Cytissorus, Argus and Melas, and, according to some accounts, Presbon was another one of his brothers.

Another story of Phrontis transpired many years after the Argonautical travels and involves Phrontis' brother Melas as a traveling merchant who was apprehended and kept in captivity by the oppressive king Talycrates (Ταλυκράτης) of the city of Ionetrea (Ιονητρεία) in the Caucasus along the Cyrus River. Many other traveling merchants who journeyed through the Caucasus were held in captivity as well. Talycrates hoped that, by holding captive as many merchants from Greece and Anatolia as possible, he could economically weaken the wealthy city-states in those regions, giving him a great advantage of conquest. Once Phrontis received word of his brother's captivity, he felt compelled to travel the long journey to rescue his brother. Phrontis prayed to Zeus for help and Zeus gave Phrontis' horse Tempestris the wings of an eagle (Zeus' sacred animal), enabling the horse to fly over the high Caucasus Mountains and carry Phrontis safely to Ionetrea. After arriving at Ionetrea, Phrontis freed his brother Melas, and many other Greek and Anatolian traveling merchants, from prison bonds. Afterward he helped the inhabitants of Ionetrea to revolt and to overthrow and kill Talycrates, thus liberating the Ionetrians from his tyrannical oppression. An Ionetrian maiden named Lystra joined Phrontis and Melas on the journey back to Greece, and Phrontis married Lystra in Greece.

Other uses

- Phrontis was wife of Panthous and mother of Euphorbus and Hyperenor
- Phrontis was the helmsman of Menelaus

References

- Argonauts ^[1]
- Family of Phrontis ^[2]
- Argonauts: Phrontis ^[3]

References

- [1] <http://www.marvunapp.com/Appendix/argonauts.htm>
- [2] <http://www.csulb.edu/~dbouvier/Entities/i672.htm>
- [3] http://www.messagenet.com/myths/ppt/Phrontis_1.html
-

Poeas

In Greek mythology, **Poeas**, or **Poias** was one of the Argonauts and a friend of Heracles.

- As an Argonaut, Poeas is identified as the greatest archer of the group. When facing the giant Talos, some accounts say Medea drugged the bronze giant and Poeas shot an arrow to poison him in his heel.
- More famously, Poeas had a role in the apotheosis of Heracles. When Heracles realized he was dying from poisonous centaur blood he demanded a funeral pyre built and lit once he stood atop it. Yet, none of his own men would light the pyre, a passer-by (Poeas) was asked by Heracles to light the pyre. In return for this favor Heracles bestowed his famed bow and poison arrows upon Poeas. Other versions had his son Philoctetes as the passer-by or that Poeas assigned Philoctetes the task.
- Poeas was also the king of Meliboea in Thessaly.

Talaus

In Greek mythology, **Talaus** (Ancient Greek: Ταλαός) was the king of Argos and one of the Argonauts.^[1] He was the son of Bias and Pero. His wife was Lysimache, daughter of Abas (also known as Eurynome, Lysippe^[2] or Lysianassa, daughter of Polybus^[3]). He was the father of Adrastus, Aristomachus, Astynome, Eriphyle, Mecisteus, Metidice, and Pronax.^{[4][5][6]}

References

- [1] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 2. 118
- [2] Scholia on Plato, p. 419 ed. Bekker (937, 26 ed. Baiter)
- [3] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 2. 6. 6.
- [4] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 1. 9. 13
- [5] Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 70
- [6] Pindar, Nemean Ode 9. 16

Sources

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- Barthall, Edward E. *Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Greece*. University of Miami Press, 1971, ISBN 0-87024-165-6, pp. 105-106.

Telamon

In Greek mythology, **Telamon** (in Ancient Greek, *Τελαμών*), son of the king Aeacus of Aegina, and Endeis and brother of Peleus, accompanied Jason as one of his Argonauts, and was present at the hunt for the Calydonian Boar. In the *Iliad* he was the father of Greek heroes Ajax the Great and Teucer the Archer by different mothers. Some accounts mention a third son of his, Trambelus.^{[1][2]} He and Peleus were also close friends with Heracles, assisting him on his expeditions against the Amazons and against Troy (see below).

In an earlier account recorded by Pherecydes, Telamon and Peleus were not brothers, but friends. According to this account, Telamon was the son of Actaeus and Glauce, with the latter being the daughter of Cychreus, king of Salamis;^[3] and Telamon married Periboea, daughter of King Alcatheus of Megara.

Life

After killing their half-brother, Phocus, Telamon and Peleus had to leave Aegina. King Cychreus of Salamis welcomed Telamon and befriended him. Telamon married Cychreus' daughter Periboea, who gave birth to Ajax. Later, Cychreus gave Telamon his kingdom. In other versions of the myth Cychreus' daughter is named Glauce, and Periboea is Telamon's second wife, and the daughter of Alcatheus.

Telamon also figures in both versions of Heracles' sacking of Troy, which was ruled by King Laomedon (or Tros in the alternate versions). Before the Trojan War, Poseidon sent a sea monster to attack Troy.

In the King Tros version, Heracles (along with Telamon and Oicles) agreed to kill the monster if Tros would give him the horses he received from Zeus as compensation for Zeus' kidnapping Ganymede, Tros' son. Tros agreed; Heracles succeeded and Telamon married Hesione, Tros' daughter, giving birth to Teucer by her.

In the King Laomedon version, Laomedon planned on sacrificing his daughter Hesione to Poseidon in the hope of appeasing him. Heracles rescued her at the last minute and killed both the monster and Laomedon and Laomedon's sons, except for Ganymede, who was on Mt. Olympus, and Podarces, who saved his own life by giving Heracles a golden veil Hesione had made. Telamon took Hesione as a war prize and married her, and she gave birth to Teucer by him. Due to Ajax committing suicide at Troy, Telamon banished Teucer from Salamis for not bringing his brother home.

In Apollodorus' *Library*, Telamon was almost killed during the siege of Troy. Telamon was the first one to break through the Trojan wall, which enraged Hercules as he was coveting that glory for himself. Hercules was about to cut him down with his sword when Telamon began to quickly assemble an altar out of nearby stones in honor of Hercules. Hercules was so pleased, after the sack of Troy he gave Telamon Hesione as a wife. Hesione requested that she be able to bring her brother Podarces with her. Hercules would not allow it unless Hesione bought Podarces as a slave. Hesione paid for her brother with a veil. Podarces name was then changed to Priam – which, according to



Architectural telamon on the Wayne County, Ohio courthouse.

Greek author Apollodorus, was derived from the Greek phrase “to buy”.

The *Telamon*

The *Telamon* (also *Song of Telamon*, *Telamon Song*, *Telamon-song*) is an ancient Greek song (fl. 5th century BC) only found referred to by name in some ancient Greek plays^[4] and later scholia or commentaries. It is usually thought to be a warlike song^[5] about Telamon's son Ajax,^[6] though some other commentaries thought it to be a mournful song about Telamon himself.^[7] It began with: "Son of Telamon, warlike Ajax! They say you are the bravest of the Grecians who came to Troy, next to Achilles."^[8]

In architecture

In architecture telamons are "*colossal male figures used as columns*."^[9] (See image above) These are also called atlas, atlantes or atlantids; they are the male versions of caryatids.

Sources

- *Bibliotheca* I, viii, 2 and ix 16; II, vi, 4; III, xii,6-7.
- Apollonius Rhodius. *Argonautica* I, 90-94.
- Ovid. *Metamorphoses*, VIII, 309.

Notes

[1] Parthenius, *Love Romances*, 26

[2] Tzetzes on Lycophron, 467

[3] *Bibliotheca* iii. 12. 6

[4] Especially Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, line 1236-1238.

[5] E.g. Anton Powell, Stephen Hodkinson, *The Shadow of Sparta*, Routledge, 1994, p. 39-40; and most annotated editions of *Lysistrata* (such as Jeffrey Henderson, *Three Plays by Aristophanes*, Routledge, 1996, p. 220).

[6] According to Eustathius of Thessalonica (commentaries on *Iliad*, Roman Edition, vol. 2, p. 285), the song took this name from its first line, "Son of Telamon".

[7] According to Erasmus (*Adagia*, 3, 4, 10: "Canere de Telamone"), the *Telamon* would have been a plaintive song about the father mourning his son.

[8] English translation of the *Telamon* quoted from *A Select Collection of English Songs*, vol. I, 1783, "A Historical Essay on the Origin and Progress of National Song", subpage x ([http://books.google.com/books?id=6a4iAAAAAMAAJ&pg=PR15-IA9&dq=Son+of+Telamon,+warlike+Ajax"&output=html](http://books.google.com/books?id=6a4iAAAAAMAAJ&pg=PR15-IA9&dq=Son+of+Telamon,+warlike+Ajax))

[9] Hersey, George, *The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1998 pp. 125, 126

Tiphys

In Greek mythology, **Tiphys** (Τῖφυς), son of Hagnias (or of Phorbas and Hyrmina), was the helmsman of the Argonauts. He died of a mysterious illness. After his death, Ancaeus piloted the *Argo*.^[1]

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- [1] Semi-public narration in Apollonius' *Argonautica*. Berkowitz, Gary. 2004. p. 18
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The Trojan War and its Heroes

Trojan War

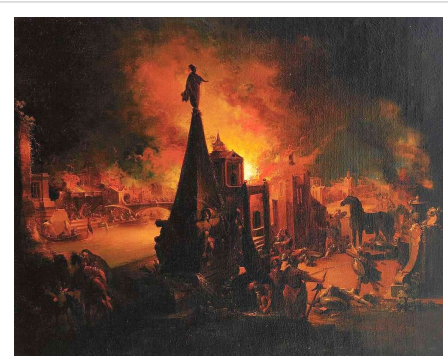
In Greek mythology, the **Trojan War** was waged against the city of Troy by the Achaeans (Greeks) after Paris of Troy took Helen from her husband Menelaus king of Sparta. The war is one of the most important events in Greek mythology and has been narrated through many works of Greek literature, most notably through Homer's *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The *Iliad* relates a part of the last year of the siege of Troy; the *Odyssey* describes Odysseus's journey home. Other parts of the war are contained in a cycle of epic poems, which have survived through fragments. Episodes from the war provided material for Greek tragedy and other works of Greek literature, and for Roman poets including Virgil and Ovid.

The war originated from a quarrel between the goddesses Athena, Hera, and Aphrodite, after Eris, the goddess of strife and discord, gave them a golden apple, sometimes known as the Apple of Discord, marked "for the fairest". Zeus sent the goddesses to Paris, who judged that Aphrodite, as the "fairest", should receive the apple. In exchange, Aphrodite made Helen, the most beautiful of all women and wife of Menelaus, fall in love with Paris, who took her to Troy. Agamemnon, king of Mycenae and the brother of Helen's husband Menelaus, led an expedition of Achaean troops to Troy and besieged the city for ten years because of Paris' insult. After the deaths of many heroes, including the Achaeans Achilles and Ajax, and the Trojans Hector and Paris, the city fell to the ruse of the Trojan Horse. The Achaeans slaughtered the Trojans (except for some of the women and children whom they kept or sold as slaves) and desecrated the temples, thus earning the gods' wrath. Few of the Achaeans returned safely to their homes and many founded colonies in distant shores. The Romans later traced their origin to Aeneas, one of the Trojans, who was said to have led the surviving Trojans to modern day Italy.

The ancient Greeks thought that the Trojan War was a historical event that had taken place in the 13th or 12th century BC, and believed that Troy was located in modern-day Turkey near the Dardanelles. By modern times, both the war and the city were widely believed to be non-historical. In 1868, however, the German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann met Frank Calvert, who convinced Schliemann that Troy was at Hissarlik and Schliemann took over Calvert's excavations on property belonging to Calvert^[1]; this claim is now accepted by most scholars.^{[2][3]} Whether there is any historical reality behind the Trojan War is an open question. Many scholars believe that there is a historical core to the tale, though this may simply mean that the Homeric stories are a fusion of various tales of sieges and expeditions by Mycenaean Greeks during the Bronze Age. Those who believe that the stories of the Trojan War are derived from a specific historical conflict usually date it to the 12th or 11th centuries BC, often preferring the dates given by Eratosthenes, 1194–1184 BC, which roughly corresponds with archaeological evidence of a catastrophic burning of Troy VIIa.^[4]

Sources

The events of the Trojan War are found in many works of Greek literature and depicted in numerous works of Greek art. There is no single, authoritative text which tells the entire events of the war. Instead, the story is assembled from a variety of sources, some of which report contradictory versions of the events. The most important literary sources are the two epic poems traditionally credited to Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, composed sometime between the 9th and 6th centuries BC.^[5] Each poem narrates only a part of the war. The *Iliad* covers a short period in the last year of the siege of Troy, while the *Odyssey* concerns Odysseus's return to his home island of Ithaca, following the sack of Troy.



The Burning of Troy (1759/62), oil painting by Johann Georg Trautmann

Other parts of the Trojan War were told in the poems of the Epic Cycle, also known as the Cyclic Epics: the *Cypria*, *Aethiopis*, *Little Iliad*, *Iliou Persis*, *Nostoi*, and *Telegony*. Though these poems survive only in fragments, their content is known from a summary included in Proclus' *Chrestomathy*.^[6] The authorship of the Cyclic Epics is uncertain. It is generally thought that the poems were written down in the 7th and 6th century BC, after the composition of the Homeric poems, though it is widely believed that they were based on earlier traditions.^[7] Both the Homeric epics and the Epic Cycle take origin from oral tradition. Even after the composition of the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and the Cyclic Epics, the myths of the Trojan War were passed on orally, in many genres of poetry and through non-poetic storytelling. Events and details of the story that are only found in later authors may have been passed on through oral tradition and could be as old as the Homeric poems. Visual art, such as vase-painting, was another medium in which myths of the Trojan War circulated.^[8]

In later ages playwrights, historians, and other intellectuals would create works inspired by the Trojan War. The three great tragedians of Athens, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, wrote many dramas that portray episodes from the Trojan War. Among Roman writers the most important is the 1st century BC poet Virgil. In Book 2 of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas narrates the sack of Troy; this section of the poem is thought to rely on material from the Cyclic Epic *Iliou Persis*.

Legend

The following summary of the Trojan War follows the order of events as given in Proclus' summary, along with the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aeneid*, supplemented with details drawn from other authors.

Origins of the war

The plan of Zeus

According to Greek mythology, Zeus had become king of the gods by overthrowing his father Cronus; Cronus in turn had overthrown his father Uranus. Zeus was not faithful to his wife and sister Hera, and had many relationships from which many children were born. Since Zeus believed that there were too many people populating the earth, he envisioned Momus^[9] or Themis,^[10] who was to use the Trojan War as a means to depopulate the Earth, especially of his demigod descendants.^[11]

The Judgement of Paris

Zeus came to learn from either Themis^[12] or Prometheus, after Heracles had released him from Caucasus,^[13] that, like his father Cronus, one of his sons would overthrow him. Another prophecy stated that a son of the sea-nymph Thetis, with whom Zeus fell in love after gazing upon her in the oceans off the Greek coast, would become greater than his father.^[14] Possibly for one or both of these reasons,^[15] Thetis was betrothed to an elderly human king, Peleus son of Aiakos, either upon Zeus' orders,^[16] or because she wished to please Hera, who had raised her.^[17]

All of the gods were invited to Peleus and Thetis' wedding and brought many gifts,^[18] except Eris (the goddess of discord), who was stopped at the door by Hermes, on Zeus' order.^[19] Insulted, she threw from the door a gift of her own:^[20] a golden apple (το μήλον της έριδος) on which were inscribed the word καλλίστη *Kallistēi* ("To the fairest").^[21] The apple was claimed by Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite. They quarreled bitterly over it, and none of the other gods would venture an opinion favoring one, for fear of earning the enmity of the other two. Eventually, Zeus ordered Hermes to lead the three goddesses to Paris, a prince of Troy, who, unaware of his ancestry, was being raised as a shepherd in Mount Ida,^[22] because of a prophecy that he would be the downfall of Troy.^[23] After bathing in the spring of Ida, the goddesses appeared to him naked, either for the sake of winning or at Paris' request. Paris was unable to decide between them, so the goddesses resorted to bribes. Athena offered Paris wisdom, skill in battle, and the abilities of the greatest warriors; Hera offered him political power and control of all of Asia; and Aphrodite offered him the love of the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen of Sparta. Paris awarded the apple to Aphrodite, and, after several adventures, returned to Troy, where he was recognized by his royal family.



The Judgment of Paris (1904) by Enrique Simonet



Thetis gives her son Achilles weapons forged by Hephaestus (detail of Attic black-figure hydria, 575–550 BC)

Peleus and Thetis bore a son, whom they named Achilles. It was foretold that he would either die of old age after an uneventful life, or die young in a battlefield and gain immortality through poetry.^[24] Furthermore, when Achilles was nine years old, Calchas had prophesied that Troy could not again fall without his help.^[25] A number of sources credit Thetis with attempting to make Achilles immortal when he was an infant. Some of these state that she held him over fire every night to burn away his mortal parts and rubbed him with ambrosia during the day, but Peleus discovered her actions and stopped her.^[26] According to some versions of this story, Thetis had already destroyed several sons in this manner, and Peleus' action therefore saved his son's life.^[27] Other sources state that Thetis bathed Achilles in the River Styx, the river that runs to the under world, making him invulnerable wherever he had touched the water.^[28] Because she had held him by the heel, it was not immersed during the bathing and thus the heel remained mortal and vulnerable to injury (hence the expression "Achilles heel" for an isolated weakness). He grew up to be the greatest of all mortal warriors. After Calchas' prophesy, Thetis hid Achilles in Skyros at the court of king Lycomedes, where he was disguised as a girl.^[29] At a crucial point in the war, she assists her son by providing weapons divinely forged by Hephaestus (see below).

Elopement of Paris and Helen

The most beautiful woman in the world was Helen, one of the daughters of Tyndareus, King of Sparta. Her mother was Leda, who had been either raped or seduced by Zeus in the form of a swan.^[30] Accounts differ over which of Leda's four children, two pairs of twins, were fathered by Zeus and which by Tyndareus. However, Helen is usually credited as Zeus' daughter,^[31] and sometimes Nemesis is credited as her mother.^[32] Helen had scores of suitors, and her father was unwilling to choose one for fear the others would retaliate violently.

Finally, one of the suitors, Odysseus of Ithaca, proposed a plan to solve the dilemma. In exchange for Tyndareus' support of his own suit towards Penelope,^[33] he suggested that Tyndareus require all of Helen's suitors to promise that they would defend the marriage of Helen, regardless of whom he chose. The suitors duly swore the required oath on the severed pieces of a horse, although not without a certain amount of grumbling.^[34]

Tyndareus chose Menelaus. Menelaus was a political choice on her father's part. He had wealth and power. He had humbly not petitioned for her himself, but instead sent his brother Agamemnon on his behalf. He had promised Aphrodite a hecatomb, a sacrifice of 100 oxen, if he won Helen, but forgot about it and earned her wrath.^[35] Menelaus inherited Tyndareus' throne of Sparta with Helen as his queen when her brothers, Castor and Pollux, became gods,^[36] and when Agamemnon married Helen's sister Clytemnestra and took back the throne of Mycenae.^[37]

Paris, under the guise of a supposed diplomatic mission, went to Sparta to get Helen and bring her back to Troy. Before Helen could look up, to see him enter the palace, she was shot with an arrow from Eros, otherwise known as Cupid, and fell in love with Paris when she saw him, as promised by Aphrodite. Menelaus had left for Crete^[38] to bury his uncle, Crateus.^[39] Hera, still jealous over his judgement, sent a storm.^[38] The storm caused the lovers to land in Egypt, where the gods replaced Helen with a likeness of her made of clouds, Nephele.^[40] The myth of Helen being switched is attributed to the 6th century BC Sicilian poet Stesichorus. For Homer the true Helen was in Troy. The ship then landed in Sidon before reaching Troy. Paris, fearful of getting caught, spent some time there and then sailed to Troy.^[41]



The Abduction of Helen (1530–39) by Francesco Primaticcio, with Aphrodite directing

Paris' abduction of Helen had several precedents. Io was taken from Mycenae, Europa was taken from Phoenicia, Jason took Medea from Colchis,^[42] and the Trojan princess Hesione had been taken by Heracles, who gave her to Telamon of Salamis.^[43] According to Herodotus, Paris was emboldened by these examples to steal himself a wife from Greece, and expected no retribution, since there had been none in the other cases.^[44]

The gathering of Achaean forces and the first expedition

According to Homer, Menelaus and his ally, Odysseus, traveled to Troy, where they unsuccessfully sought to recover Helen by diplomatic means.^[45]

Menelaus then asked Agamemnon to uphold his oath. He agreed and sent emissaries to all the Achaean kings and princes to call them to observe their oaths and retrieve Helen.^[46]

Odysseus and Achilles

Since Menelaus's wedding, Odysseus had married Penelope and fathered a son, Telemachus. In order to avoid the war, he feigned madness and sowed his fields with salt. Palamedes outwitted him by placing his infant son in front of the plough's path, and Odysseus turned aside, unwilling to kill his son, so revealing his sanity and forcing him to join the war.^{[38][47]}

According to Homer, however, Odysseus supported the military adventure from the beginning, and traveled the region with Pylos' king, Nestor, to recruit forces.^[48]

At Skyros, Achilles had an affair with the king's daughter Deidamia, resulting in a child, Neoptolemus.^[49] Odysseus, Telamonian Ajax, and Achilles' tutor Phoenix went to retrieve Achilles. Achilles' mother disguised him as a woman so that he would not have to go to war, but, according to one story, they blew a horn, and Achilles revealed himself by seizing a spear to fight intruders, rather than fleeing.^[50] According to another story, they disguised themselves as merchants bearing trinkets and weaponry, and Achilles was marked out from the other women for admiring weaponry instead of clothes and jewelry.^[51]

Pausanias said that, according to Homer, Achilles did not hide in Skyros, but rather conquered the island, as part of the Trojan War.^[52]



Map of Homeric Greece



The Discovery of Achilles among the Daughters of Lycomedes (1664) by Jan de Bray

First gathering at Aulis

The Achean forces first gathered at Aulis. All the suitors sent their forces except King Cinyras of Cyprus. Though he sent breastplates to Agamemnon and promised to send 50 ships, he sent only one real ship, led by the son of Mygdalion, and 49 ships made of clay.^[53] Idomeneus was willing to lead the Cretan contingent in Mycenae's war against Troy, but only as a co-commander, which he was granted.^[54] The last commander to arrive was Achilles, who was then 15 years old.

Following a sacrifice to Apollo, a snake slithered from the altar to a sparrow's nest in a plane tree nearby. It ate the mother and her nine

babies, then was turned to stone. Calchas interpreted this as a sign that Troy would fall in the tenth year of the war.^[55]

Telephus

When the Achaeans left for the war, they did not know the way, and accidentally landed in Mysia, ruled by King Telephus, son of Heracles, who had led a contingent of Arcadians to settle there.^[56] In the battle, Achilles wounded Telephus,^[57] who had killed Thersander.^[58] Because the wound would not heal, Telephus asked an oracle, "What will happen to the wound?". The oracle responded, "he that wounded shall heal". The Achaean fleet then set sail and was scattered by a storm. Achilles landed in Scyros and married Deidamia. A new gathering was set again in Aulis.^[38]

Telephus went to Aulis, and either pretended to be a beggar, asking Agamemnon to help heal his wound,^[59] or kidnapped Orestes and held him for ransom, demanding the wound be healed.^[60] Achilles refused, claiming to have no medical knowledge. Odysseus reasoned that the spear that had inflicted the wound must be able to heal it. Pieces of the spear were scraped off onto the wound, and Telephus was healed.^[61] Telephus then showed the Achaeans the route to Troy.^[59]

Some scholars have regarded the expedition against Telephus and its resolution as a derivative reworking of elements from the main story of the Trojan War, but it has also been seen as fitting the story-pattern of the "preliminary adventure" that anticipates events and themes from the main narrative, and therefore as likely to be "early and integral".^[62]

The second gathering

Eight years after the storm had scattered them,^[63] the fleet of more than a thousand ships was gathered again. But when they had all reached Aulis, the winds ceased. The prophet Calchas stated that the goddess Artemis was punishing Agamemnon for killing either a sacred deer or a deer in a sacred grove, and boasting that he was a better hunter than she.^[38] The only way to appease Artemis, he said, was to sacrifice Iphigenia, who was either the daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra,^[64] or of Helen and Theseus entrusted to Clytemnestra when Helen married Menelaus.^[65] Agamemnon refused, and the other commanders threatened to make Palamedes commander of the expedition.^[66] According to some versions, Agamemnon relented, but others claim that he sacrificed a deer in her place, or that at the last



Map of the Troad (Troas)

moment, Artemis took pity on the girl, and took her to be a maiden in one of her temples, substituting a lamb.^[38] Hesiod says that Iphigenia became the goddess Hecate.^[67]

The Achaean forces are described in detail in the Catalogue of Ships, in the second book of the *Iliad*. They consisted of 28 contingents from mainland Greece, the Peloponnese, the Dodecanese islands, Crete, and Ithaca, comprising 1178 pentekontoroi, ships with 50 rowers. Thucydides says^[68] that according to tradition there were about 1200 ships, and that the Boeotian ships had 120 men, while Philoctetes' ships only had the fifty rowers, these probably being maximum and minimum. These numbers would mean a total force of 70,000 to 130,000 men. Another catalogue of ships is given by the *Bibliotheca* that differs somewhat but agrees in numbers. Some scholars have claimed that Homer's catalogue is an original Bronze Age document, possibly the Achaean commander's order of operations.^{[69][70][71]} Others believe it was a fabrication of Homer.

The second book of the *Iliad* also lists the Trojan allies, consisting of the Trojans themselves, led by Hector, and various allies listed as Dardanians led by Aeneas, Zeleians, Adrasteians, Percotians, Pelasgians, Thracians, Ciconian spearmen, Paionian archers, Halizones, Mysians, Phrygians, Maeonians, Miletians, Lycians led by Sarpedon and Carians. Nothing is said of the Trojan language; the Carians are specifically said to be barbarian-speaking, and the allied contingents are said to have spoken multiple languages, requiring orders to be translated by their individual commanders.^[72] It should be noted, however, that the Trojans and Achaeans in the *Iliad* share the same religion, same culture and the enemy heroes speak to each other in the same language, though this could be dramatic effect.



Philoctetes on Lemnos, with
Heracles' bow and quiver (Attic
red-figure lekythos, 420 BCE)

Nine years of war

Philoctetes

Philoctetes was Heracles' friend, and because he lit Heracles's funeral pyre when no one else would, he received Heracles' bow and arrows.^[73] He sailed with seven ships full of men to the Trojan War, where he was planning on fighting for the Achaeans. They stopped either at Chryse Island for supplies,^[74] or in Tenedos, along with the rest of the fleet.^[75] Philoctetes was then bitten by a snake. The wound festered and had a foul smell; on Odysseus's advice, the Atreidae ordered Philoctetes to stay on Lemnos.^[38] Medon took control of Philoctetes's men. While landing on Tenedos, Achilles killed king Tenes, son of Apollo, despite a warning by his mother that if he did so he would be killed himself by Apollo.^[76] From Tenedos, Agamemnon sent an embassy to Priam, composed of Menelaus, Odysseus, and Palamedes, asking for Helen's return. The embassy was refused.^[77]

Philoctetes stayed on Lemnos for ten years, which was a deserted island according to Sophocles' tragedy *Philoctetes*, but according to earlier tradition was populated by Minyans.^[78]

Arrival

Calchas had prophesied that the first Achean to walk on land after stepping off a ship would be the first to die.^[79] Thus even the leading Greeks hesitated to land. Finally, Protesilaus, leader of the Phylaceans, landed first.^[80] Odysseus had tricked him, in throwing his own shield down to land on, so that while he was first to leap off his ship, he was not the first to land on Trojan soil. Hector killed Protesilaus in single combat, though the Trojans conceded the beach. In the second wave of attacks, Achilles killed Cynus, son of Poseidon. The Trojans then fled to the safety of the walls of their city.^[81] Protesilaus had killed many Trojans but was killed by Hector in most versions of the story,^[82] though others list Aeneas, Achates, or Ephorbus as his slayer.^[83] The Achaeans buried him as a god on the Thracian peninsula, across the Troad.^[84] After Protesilaus' death, his brother, Podarces, took command of his troops.

Achilles' campaigns

The Achaeans besieged Troy for nine years. This part of the war is the least developed among surviving sources, which prefer to talk about events in the last year of the war. After the initial landing the army was gathered in its entirety again only in the tenth year. Thucydides deduces that this was due to lack of money. They raided the Trojan allies and spent time farming the Thracian peninsula.^[85] Troy was never completely besieged, thus it maintained communications with the interior of Asia Minor. Reinforcements continued to come until the very end. The Achaeans controlled only the entrance to the Dardanelles, and Troy and her allies controlled the shortest point at Abydos and Sestus and communicated with allies in Europe.^[86]

Achilles and Ajax were the most active of the Achaeans, leading separate armies to raid lands of Trojan allies. According to Homer, Achilles conquered 11 cities and 12 islands.^[87] According to Apollodorus, he raided the land of Aeneas in the Troad region and stole his cattle.^[88] He also captured Lyrnessus, Pedasus, and many of the neighbouring cities, and killed Troilus, son of Priam, who was still a youth; it was said that if he reached 20 years of age, Troy would not fall. According to Apollodorus,

He also took Lesbos and Phocaea, then Colophon, and Smyrna, and Clazomenae, and Cyme; and afterwards Aegialus and Tenos, the so-called Hundred Cities; then, in order, Adramytium and Side; then Endium, and Linaeum, and Colone. He took also Hypoplacian Thebes and Lyrnessus, and further Antandrus, and many other cities.^[89]

Kakrides comments that the list is wrong in that it extends too far into the south.^[90] Other sources talk of Achilles taking Pedasus, Monenia,^[91] Mythemna (in Lesbos), and Peisidice.^[92]

Among the loot from these cities was Briseis, from Lyrnessus, who was awarded to him, and Chryseis, from Hypoplacian Thebes, who was awarded to Agamemnon.^[38] Achilles captured Lycaon, son of Priam,^[93] while he was cutting branches in his father's orchards. Patroclus sold him as a slave in Lemnos,^[38] where he was bought by Eetion of Imbros and brought back to Troy. Only 12 days later Achilles slew him, after the death of Patroclus.^[94]



Briseis and Achilles in a
17th-century book illustration by
Wenzel Hollar



Ajax and Achilles playing a board game (Black-figure Attic lekythos, ca. 500 BC)

Ajax and a game of *petteia*

Ajax son of Telamon laid waste the Thracian peninsula of which Polymestor, a son-in-law of Priam, was king. Polymestor surrendered Polydorus, one of Priam's children, of whom he had custody. He then attacked the town of the Phrygian king Teleutas, killed him in single combat and carried off his daughter Tecmessa.^[95] Ajax also hunted the Trojan flocks, both on Mount Ida and in the countryside.

Numerous paintings on pottery have suggested a tale not mentioned in the literary traditions. At some point in the war Achilles and Ajax were playing a board game (*petteia*).^{[96][97]} They were absorbed in the game and oblivious to the surrounding battle.^[98] The Trojans attacked and reached the heroes, who were only saved by an intervention of Athena.^[99]

The death of Palamedes

Odysseus was sent to Thrace to return with grain, but came back empty-handed. When scorned by Palamedes, Odysseus challenged him to do better. Palamedes set out and returned with a shipload of grain.^[100]

Odysseus had never forgiven Palamedes for threatening the life of his son. In revenge, Odysseus conceived a plot^[101] where an incriminating letter was forged, from Priam to Palamedes,^[102] and gold was planted in Palamedes' quarters. The letter and gold were "discovered", and Agamemnon had Palamedes stoned to death for treason.

However, Pausanias, quoting the *Cypria*, says that Odysseus and Diomedes drowned Palamedes, while he was fishing, and Dictys says that Odysseus and Diomedes lured Palamedes into a well, which they said contained gold, then stoned him to death.^[103]

Palamedes' father Nauplius sailed to the Troad and asked for justice, but was refused. In revenge, Nauplius traveled among the Achaean kingdoms and told the wives of the kings that they were bringing Trojan concubines to dethrone them. Many of the Greek wives were persuaded to betray their husbands, most significantly Agamemnon's wife, Clytemnestra, who was seduced by Aegisthus, son of Thyestes.^[104]

Mutiny

Near the end of the ninth year since the landing, the Achaean army, tired from the fighting and from the lack of supplies, mutinied against their leaders and demanded to return to their homes. According to the *Cypria*, Achilles forced the army to stay.^[38] According to Apollodorus, Agamemnon brought the Wine Growers, daughters of Anius, son of Apollo, who had the gift of producing by touch wine, wheat, and oil from the earth, in order to relieve the supply problem of the army.^[105]

The *Iliad*

Chryses, a priest of Apollo and father of Chryseis, came to Agamemnon to ask for the return of his daughter. Agamemnon refused, and insulted Chryses, who prayed to Apollo to avenge his ill-treatment. Enraged, Apollo afflicted the Achaean army with plague. Agamemnon was forced to return Chryseis to end the plague, and took Achilles' concubine Briseis as his own. Enraged at the dishonour Agamemnon had inflicted upon him, Achilles decided he would no longer fight. He asked his mother, Thetis, to intercede with Zeus, who agreed to give the Trojans success in the absence of Achilles, the best warrior of the Achaeans.

After the withdrawal of Achilles, the Achaeans were initially successful. Both armies gathered in full for the first time since the landing. Menelaus and Paris fought a duel, which ended when Aphrodite snatched the beaten Paris from the field. With the truce broken, the armies began fighting again. Diomedes won great renown amongst the Achaeans, killing the Trojan hero Pandaros and nearly killing Aeneas, who was only saved by his mother, Aphrodite. With the assistance of Athena, Diomedes then wounded the gods Aphrodite and Ares. During the next days, however, the Trojans drove the Achaeans back to their camp and were stopped at the Achaean wall by Poseidon. The next day, though, with Zeus' help, the Trojans broke into the Achaean camp and were on the verge of setting fire to the Achaean ships. An earlier appeal to Achilles to return was rejected, but after Hector burned Protesilaus' ship, he allowed his close friend^[106] and relative Patroclus to go into battle wearing Achilles' armour and lead his army. Patroclus drove the Trojans all the way back to the walls of Troy, and was only prevented from storming the city by the intervention of Apollo. Patroclus was then killed by Hector, who took Achilles' armour from the body of Patroclus.



Chryses pleading with Agamemnon for his daughter (360–350 BC)



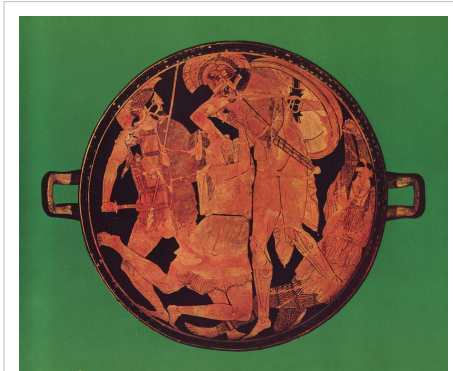
Triumphant Achilles dragging Hector's body around Troy, from a panoramic fresco of the Achilleion

Achilles, maddened with grief, swore to kill Hector in revenge. He was reconciled with Agamemnon and received Briseis back, untouched by Agamemnon. He received a new set of arms, forged by the god Hephaestus, and returned to the battlefield. He slaughtered many Trojans, and nearly killed Aeneas, who was saved by Poseidon. Achilles fought with the river god Scamander, and a battle of the gods followed. The Trojan army returned to the city, except for Hector, who remained outside the walls because he was tricked by Athena. Achilles killed Hector, and afterwards he dragged Hector's body from his chariot and refused to return the body to the Trojans for burial. The Achaeans then conducted funeral games for Patroclus. Afterwards, Priam came to Achilles' tent, guided by Hermes, and asked Achilles to return Hector's body. The armies made a temporary truce to allow the burial of the dead. The *Iliad* ends with the funeral of Hector.

After the *Iliad*

Penthesilea and the death of Achilles

Shortly after the burial of Hector, Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons, arrived with her warriors.^[107] Penthesilea, daughter of Otrere and Ares, had accidentally killed her sister Hippolyte. She was purified from this action by Priam,^[108] and in exchange she fought for him and killed many, including Machaon^[109] (according to Pausanias, Machaon was killed by Eurypylus),^[110] and according to another version, Achilles himself, who was resurrected at the request of Thetis.^[111] Penthesilea was then killed by Achilles^[112] who fell in love with her beauty after her death. Thersites, a simple soldier and the ugliest Achaean, taunted Achilles over his love^[109] and gouged out Penthesilea's eyes.^[113] Achilles slew Thersites, and after a dispute sailed to Lesbos, where he was purified for his murder by Odysseus after sacrificing to Apollo, Artemis, and Leto.^[112]



Achilles killing the Amazon Penthesilea

While they were away, Memnon of Ethiopia, son of Tithonus and Eos,^[114] came with his host to help his stepbrother Priam.^[115] He did not come directly from Ethiopia, but either from Susa in Persia, conquering all the peoples in between,^[116] or from the Caucasus, leading an army of Ethiopians and Indians.^[117] Like Achilles, he wore armour made by Hephaestus.^[118] In the ensuing battle, Memnon killed Antilochus, who took one of Memnon's blows to save his father Nestor.^[119] Achilles and Memnon then fought. Zeus weighed the fate of the two heroes; the weight containing that of Memnon sank,^[120] and he was slain by Achilles.^{[112][121]} Achilles chased the Trojans to their city, which he entered. The gods, seeing that he had killed too many of their children, decided that it was his time to die. He was killed after Paris shot a poisoned arrow that was guided by Apollo.^{[112][114][122]} In another version he was killed by a knife to the back (or heel) by Paris, while marrying Polyxena, daughter of Priam, in the temple of Thymbraean Apollo,^[123] the site where he had earlier killed Troilus. Both versions conspicuously deny the killer any sort of valour, saying Achilles remained undefeated on the battlefield. His bones were mingled with those of Patroclus, and funeral games were held.^[124] Like Ajax, he is represented as living after his death in the island of Leuke, at the mouth of the Danube River,^[125] where he is married to Helen.^[126]

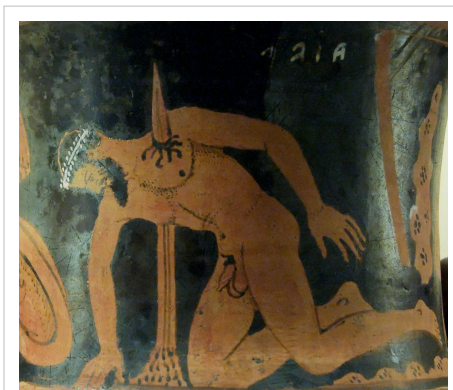
The Judgment of Arms

A great battle raged around the dead Achilles. Ajax held back the Trojans, while Odysseus carried the body away.^[127] When Achilles' armour was offered to the smartest warrior, the two that had saved his body came forward as competitors. Agamemnon, unwilling to undertake the invidious duty of deciding between the two competitors, referred the dispute to the decision of the Trojan prisoners, inquiring of them which of the two heroes had done most harm to the Trojans.^[128] Alternatively, the Trojans and Pallas Athena were the judges^{[129][130]} in that, following Nestor's advice, spies were sent to the walls to overhear what was said. A girl said that Ajax was braver:

For Aias took up and carried out of the strife the hero, Peleus' son: this great Odysseus cared not to do.

To this another replied by Athena's contrivance:

Why, what is this you say? A thing against reason and untrue!



The suicide of Ajax (from a calyx-krater, 400–350 BC, Vulci)

Even a woman could carry a load once a man had put it on her shoulder; but she could not fight. For she would fail with fear if she should fight. (Scholiast on Aristophanes, Knights 1056 and Aristophanes ib)

According to Pindar, the decision was made by secret ballot among the Achaeans.^[131] In all story versions, the arms were awarded to Odysseus. Driven mad with grief, Ajax desired to kill his comrades, but Athena caused him to mistake the cattle and their herdsmen for the Achean warriors.^[132] In his frenzy he scourged two rams, believing them to be Agamemnon and Menelaus.^[133] In the morning, he came to his senses and killed himself by jumping on the sword that had been given to him by Hector, so that it pierced his armpit, his only vulnerable part.^[134] According to an older tradition, he was killed by the Trojans who, seeing he was invulnerable, attacked him with clay until he was covered by it and could no longer move, thus dying of starvation.

The prophecies

After the tenth year, it was prophesied^[135] that Troy could not fall without Heracles' bow, which was with Philoctetes in Lemnos. Odysseus and Diomedes^[136] retrieved Philoctetes, whose wound had healed.^[137] Philoctetes then shot and killed Paris.

According to Apollodorus, Paris' brothers Helenus and Deiphobus vied over the hand of Helen. Deiphobus prevailed, and Helenus abandoned Troy for Mt. Ida. Calchas said that Helenus knew the prophecies concerning the fall of Troy, so Odysseus waylaid Helenus.^{[130][138]} Under coercion, Helenus told the Achaeans that they would win if they retrieved Pelops' bones, persuaded Achilles' son Neoptolemus to fight for them, and stole the Trojan Palladium.^[139]

The Greeks retrieved Pelop's bones,^[140] and sent Odysseus to retrieve Neoptolemus, who was hiding from the war in King Lycomedes's court in Scyros. Odysseus gave him his father's arms.^{[130][141]} Eurypylus, son of Telephus, leading, according to Homer, a large force of *Kêteioi*,^[142] or Hittites or Mysians according to Apollodorus,^[143] arrived to aid the Trojans. He killed Machaon^[110] and Peneleos,^[144] but was slain by Neoptolemus.

Disguised as a beggar, Odysseus went to spy inside Troy, but was recognized by Helen. Homesick,^[145] Helen plotted with Odysseus. Later, with Helen's help, Odysseus and Diomedes stole the Palladium.^{[130][146]}



The earliest known depiction of the Trojan Horse, from the Mykonos vase ca. 670 BC

Trojan Horse

The end of the war came with one final plan. Odysseus devised a new ruse—a giant hollow wooden horse, an animal that was sacred to the Trojans. It was built by Epeius and guided by Athena,^[147] from the wood of a cornel tree grove sacred to Apollo,^[148] with the inscription:

The Greeks dedicate this thank-offering to Athena for their return home.^[149]

The hollow horse was filled with soldiers^[150] led by Odysseus. The rest of the army burned the camp and sailed for Tenedos.^[151]

When the Trojans discovered that the Greeks were gone, believing the war was over, they "joyfully dragged the horse inside the city",^[152]

while they debated what to do with it. Some thought they ought to hurl it down from the rocks, others thought they should burn it, while others said they ought to dedicate it to Athena.^{[153][154]}

Both Cassandra and Laocoön warned against keeping the horse.^[155] While Cassandra had been given the gift of prophecy by Apollo, she was also cursed by Apollo never to be believed. Serpents then came out of the sea and devoured either Laocoön and one of his two sons,^[153] Laocoön and both his sons,^[156] or only his sons,^[157] a portent which so alarmed the followers of Aeneas that they withdrew to Ida.^[153] The Trojans decided to keep the horse and turned to a night of mad revelry and celebration.^[130] Sinon, an Achaean spy, signaled the fleet stationed at Tenedos when "it was midnight and the clear moon was rising"^[158] and the soldiers from inside the horse emerged and killed

the guards.^[159]

The Sack of Troy

The Achaeans entered the city and killed the sleeping population. A great massacre followed which continued into the day.

Blood ran in torrents, drenched was all the earth,

As Trojans and their alien helpers died.

Here were men lying quelled by bitter death

All up and down the city in their blood.^[160]

The Trojans, fuelled with desperation, fought back fiercely, despite being disorganized and leaderless. With the fighting at its height, some donned fallen enemies' attire and launched surprise counterattacks in the chaotic street fighting. Other defenders hurled down roof tiles and anything else heavy down on the rampaging attackers. The outlook was grim though, and eventually the remaining defenders were destroyed along with the whole city.



Neoptolemus, son of Achilles, kills King Priam
(detail of Attic black-figure amphora, 520–510 BC)

Neoptolemus killed Priam, who had taken refuge at the altar of Zeus of the Courtyard.^{[153][161]} Menelaus killed Deiphobus, Helen's husband after Paris' death, and also intended to kill Helen, but, overcome by her beauty, threw down his sword^[162] and took her to the ships.^{[153][163]}

Ajax the Lesser raped Cassandra on Athena's altar while she was clinging to her statue. Because of Ajax's impiety, the Achaeans, urged by Odysseus, wanted to stone him to death, but he fled to Athena's altar, and was spared.^{[153][164]}

Antenor, who had given hospitality to Menelaus and Odysseus when they asked for the return of Helen, and who had advocated so, was spared, along with his family.^[165] Aeneas took his father on his back and fled, and, according to Apollodorus, was allowed to go because of his piety.^[161]

The Greeks then burned the city and divided the spoils. Cassandra was awarded to Agamemnon. Neoptolemus got Andromache, wife of Hector, and Odysseus was given Hecuba, Priam's wife.^[166]

The Achaeans^[167] threw Hector's infant son Astyanax down from the walls of Troy,^[168] either out of cruelty and hate^[169] or to end the royal line, and the possibility of a son's revenge.^[170] They (by usual tradition Neoptolemus) also sacrificed the Trojan princess Polyxena on the grave of Achilles as demanded by his ghost, either as part of his spoil or because she had betrayed him.^[171]

Aethra, Theseus' mother, and one of Helen's handmaids,^[172] was rescued by her grandsons, Demophon and Acamas.^{[153][173]}

The returns

The gods were very angry over the destruction of their temples and other sacrilegious acts by the Achaeans, and decided that most would not return home. A storm fell on the returning fleet off Tenos island. Additionally, Nauplius, in revenge for the murder of his son Palamedes, set up false lights in Cape Caphereus (also known today as Cavo D'Oro, in Euboea) and many were shipwrecked.^[174]

- Nestor, who had the best conduct in Troy and did not take part in the looting, was the only hero who had a fast and safe return.^[175] Those of his army that survived the war also reached home with him safely, but later left and colonised Metapontium in Southern Italy.^[176]

- Ajax the Lesser, who had endured more than the others the wrath of the Gods, never returned. His ship was wrecked by a storm sent by Athena, who borrowed one of Zeus' thunderbolts and tore it to pieces. The crew managed to land in a rock, but Poseidon struck it, and Ajax fell in the sea and drowned. He was buried by Thetis in Myconos^[177] or Delos.^[178]
- Teucer, son of Telamon and half-brother of Ajax, stood trial by his father for his half-brother's death. He was disowned by his father and wasn't allowed back on Salamis Island. He was at sea near Phreattys in Peiraeus.^[179] He was acquitted of responsibility but found guilty of negligence because he did not return his dead body or his arms. He left with his army (who took their wives) and founded Salamis in Cyprus.^[180] The Athenians later created a political myth that his son left his kingdom to Theseus' sons (and not to Megara).
- Neoptolemus, following the advice of Helenus, who accompanied him when he traveled over land, was always accompanied by Andromache. He met Odysseus and they buried Phoenix, Achilles' teacher, on the land of the Ciconians. They then conquered the land of the Molossians (Epirus) and Neoptolemus had a child by Andromache, Molossus, to whom he later gave the throne.^[181] Thus the kings of Epirus claimed their lineage from Achilles, and so did Alexander the Great, whose mother was of that royal house. Alexander the Great and the kings of Macedon also claimed to be descended from Heracles. Helenus founded a city in Molossia and inhabited it, and Neoptolemus gave him his mother Deidamia as wife. After Peleus died he succeeded Phtia's throne.^[182] He had a feud with Orestes (son of Agamemnon) over Menelaus' daughter Hermione, and was killed in Delphi, where he was buried.^[183] In Roman myths, the kingdom of Phtia was taken over by Helenus, who married Andromache. They offered hospitality to other Trojan refugees, including Aeneas, who paid a visit there during his wanderings.
- Diomedes was first thrown by a storm on the coast of Lycia, where he was to be sacrificed to Ares by king Lycus, but Callirrhoe, the king's daughter, took pity upon him, and assisted him in escaping.^[184] He then accidentally landed in Attica, in Phaleron. The Athenians, unaware that they were allies, attacked them. Many were killed, and Demophon took the Palladium.^[185] He finally landed in Argos, where he found his wife Aegialeia committing adultery. In disgust, he left for Aetolia.^[186] According to later traditions, he had some adventures and founded Canusium and Argyrippa in Southern Italy.^[187]
- Philoctetes, due to a sedition, was driven from his city and emigrated to Italy, where he founded the cities of Petilia, Old Crimissa, and Chone, between Croton and Thurii.^[188] After making war on the Leucanians he founded there a sanctuary of Apollo the Wanderer, to whom also he dedicated his bow.^[189]
- According to Homer, Idomeneus reached his house safe and sound.^[190] Another tradition later formed. After the war, Idomeneus's ship hit a horrible storm. Idomeneus promised Poseidon that he would sacrifice the first living thing he saw when he returned home if Poseidon would save his ship and crew. The first living thing he saw was his son, whom Idomeneus duly sacrificed. The gods were angry at his murder of his own son and they sent a plague to Crete. His people sent him into exile to Calabria in Italy,^[191] and then to Colophon, in Asia Minor, where he died.^[192] Among the lesser Achaeans very few reached their homes.



Poseidon smites Ajax the Lesser, by Bonaventura Genelli (1798–1868)

House of Atreus

According to the *Odyssey*, Menelaus's fleet was blown by storms to Crete and Egypt, where they were unable to sail away due to calm winds.^[193] Only five of his ships survived.^[175] Menelaus had to catch Proteus, a shape-shifting sea god, to find out what sacrifices to which gods he would have to make to guarantee safe passage.^[194] According to some stories the Helen who was taken by Paris was a fake, and the real Helen was in Egypt, where she was reunited with Menelaus. Proteus also told Menelaus that he was destined for Elysium (Heaven) after his death. Menelaus returned to Sparta with Helen eight years after he had left Troy.^[195]



The murder of Agamemnon (1879 illustration from Alfred Church's *Stories from the Greek Tragedians*)

Agamemnon returned home with Cassandra to Argos. His wife Clytemnestra (Helen's sister) was having an affair with Aegisthus, son of Thyestes, Agamemnon's cousin who had conquered Argos before Agamemnon himself retook it. Possibly out of vengeance for the death of Iphigenia, Clytemnestra plotted with her lover to kill Agamemnon. Cassandra foresaw this murder, and warned Agamemnon, but he disregarded her. He was killed, either at a feast or in his bath,^[196] according to different versions. Cassandra was also killed.^[197] Agamemnon's son Orestes, who had been away, returned and conspired with his sister Electra to avenge their father.^[198] He killed Clytemnestra and Aegisthus and succeeded to his father's throne.^{[199][200]}

The Odyssey

Odysseus' ten year journey home to Ithaca was told in Homer's *Odyssey*. Odysseus and his men were blown far off course to lands unknown to the Achaeans; there Odysseus had many adventures, including the famous encounter with the Cyclops Polyphemus, and an audience with the seer Teiresias in Hades. On the island of Thrinacia, Odysseus' men ate the cattle sacred to the sun-god Helios. For this sacrilege Odysseus' ships were destroyed, and all his men perished. Odysseus had not eaten the cattle, and was allowed to live; he washed ashore on the island of Ogygia, and lived there with the nymph Calypso. After seven years, the gods decided to send Odysseus home; on a small raft, he sailed to Scheria, the home of the Phaeacians, who gave him passage to Ithaca.



Odysseus and Polyphemus by Arnold Böcklin: the Cyclops' curse delays the homecoming of Odysseus for another ten years

Once in his home land, Odysseus traveled disguised as an old beggar. He was recognised by his dog, Argos, who died in his lap. He then discovered that his wife, Penelope, had been faithful to him during the 20 years he was absent, despite the countless suitors that were eating his food and spending his property. With the help of his son Telemachus, Athena, and Eumaeus, the swineherd, he killed all of them except Medon, who had been polite to Penelope, and Phemius, a local singer who had only been forced to help the suitors against Penelope. Penelope tested Odysseus and made sure it was him, and he forgave her. The next day the suitors' relatives tried to take revenge on him but they were stopped by Athena.

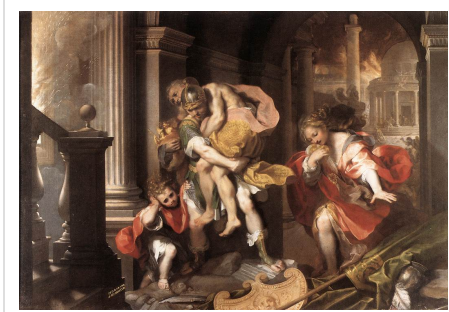
The Telegony

The *Telegony* picks up where the *Odyssey* leaves off, beginning with the burial of the dead suitors, and continues until the death of Odysseus.^[201] Some years after Odysseus' return, Telegonus, the son of Odysseus and Circe, came to Ithaca and plundered the island. Odysseus, attempting to fight off the attack, was killed by his unrecognized son. After Telegonus realized he had killed his father, he brought the body to his mother Circe, along with Telemachus and Penelope. Circe made them immortal; then Telegonus married Penelope and Telemachus married Circe.

The Aeneid

The journey of the Trojan survivor Aeneas and his resettling of Trojan refugees in Italy are the subject of the Latin epic poem *The Aeneid* by Virgil. Writing during the time of Augustus, Virgil has his hero give a first-person account of the fall of Troy in the second of the *Aeneid*'s twelve books; the Trojan Horse, which does not appear in "The Iliad", became legendary from Virgil's account.

Aeneas leads a group of survivors away from the city, among them his son Ascanius (also known as Iulus), his trumpeter Misenus, father Anchises, the healer Iapyx, his faithful sidekick Achates, and Mimas as a guide. His wife Creusa is killed during the sack of the city. Aeneas also carries the Lares and Penates of Troy, which the historical Romans claimed to preserve as guarantees of Rome's own security.



Aeneas Flees Burning Troy (1598) by Federico Barocci

The Trojan survivors escape with a number of ships, seeking to establish a new homeland elsewhere. They land in several nearby countries that prove inhospitable, and are finally told by an oracle that they must return to the land of their forebears. They first try to establish themselves in Crete, where Dardanus had once settled, but find it ravaged by the same plague that had driven Idomeneus away. They find the colony led by Helenus and Andromache, but decline to remain. After seven years they arrive in Carthage, where Aeneas has an affair with Queen Dido. (Since according to tradition Carthage was founded in 814 BC, the arrival of Trojan refugees a few hundred years earlier exposes chronological difficulties within the mythic tradition.) Eventually the gods order Aeneas to continue onward, and he and his people arrive at the mouth of the Tiber River in Italy. Dido commits suicide, and Aeneas's betrayal of her was regarded as an element in the long enmity between Rome and Carthage that expressed itself in the Punic Wars and led to Roman hegemony.

At Cumae, the Sibyl leads Aeneas on an archetypal descent to the underworld, where the shade of his dead father serves as a guide; this book of the *Aeneid* directly influenced Dante, who has Virgil act as his narrator's guide. Aeneas is given a vision of the future majesty of Rome, which it was his duty to found, and returns to the world of the living. He negotiates a settlement with the local king, Latinus, and was wed to his daughter, Lavinia. This triggered a war with other local tribes, which culminated in the founding of the settlement of Alba Longa, ruled by Aeneas and Lavinia's son Silvius. Roman myth attempted to reconcile two different founding myths: three hundred years later, in the more famous tradition, Romulus and Remus founded Rome. The Trojan origins of Rome became particularly important in the propaganda of Julius Caesar, whose family claimed descent from Venus through Aeneas's son Iulus (hence the Latin *gens* name *Iulius*), and during the reign of Augustus; see for instance the *Tabulae Iliacae* and the "Troy Game" presented frequently by the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

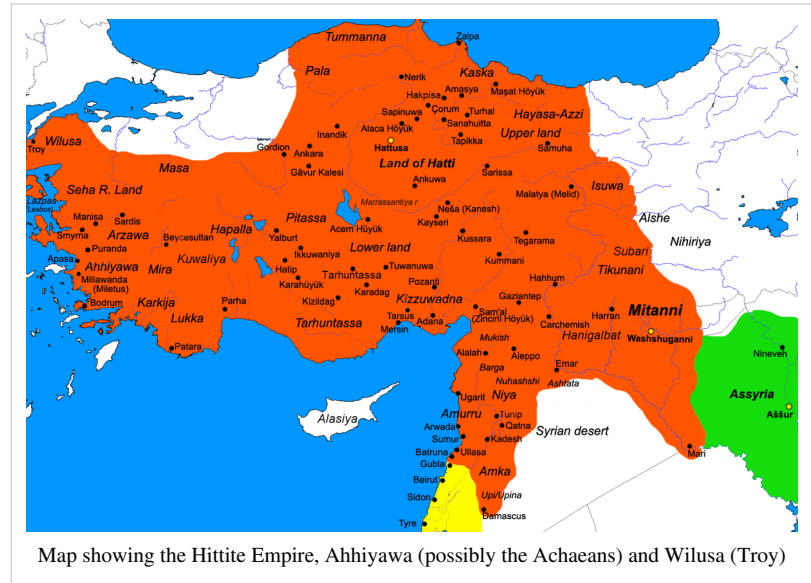
Dates of the Trojan War

Since this war was considered among the ancient Greeks as either the last event of the mythical age or the first event of the historical age, several dates are given for the fall of Troy. They usually derive from genealogies of kings. Ephorus gives 1135 BC,^[202] Sosibius 1172 BC,^[203] Eratosthenes 1184 BC/1183 BC,^[204] Timaeus 1193 BC,^[205] the Parian marble 1209 BC/1208 BC,^[206] Dicaearchus 1212 BC,^[207] Herodotus around 1250 BC,^[208] Eretes 1291 BC,^[209] while Douris 1334 BC.^[210] As for the exact day Ephorus gives 23/24 Thargelion (May 6 or 7), Hellanicus 12 Thargelion (May 26)^[211] while others give the 23rd of Sciroforion (July 7) or the 23rd of Ponamos (October 7).

The glorious and rich city Homer describes was believed to be Troy VI by many twentieth century authors, destroyed in 1275 BC, probably by an earthquake. Its follower Troy VIIa, destroyed by fire at some point during the 1180s BC, was long considered a poorer city, but since the excavation campaign of 1988 it has risen to the most likely candidate.

Historical basis

The historicity of the Trojan War is still subject to debate. Most classical Greeks thought that the war was an historical event, but many believed that the Homeric poems had exaggerated the events to suit the demands of poetry. For instance, the historian Thucydides, who is known for his critical spirit, considers it a true event but doubts that 1,186 ships were sent to Troy. Euripides started changing Greek myths at will, including those of the Trojan War. Near year 100, Dio Chrysostom argued that while the war



was historical, it ended with the Trojans winning, and the Greeks attempted to hide that fact.^[212] Around 1870 it was generally agreed in Western Europe that the Trojan War never had happened and Troy never existed.^[213] Then Heinrich Schliemann popularized his excavations at Hissarlik, which he and others believed to be Troy, and of the Mycenaean cities of Greece. Today many scholars agree that the Trojan War is based on a historical core of a Greek expedition against the city of Illium, but few would argue that the Homeric poems faithfully represent the actual events of the war.

In November 2001, geologists John C. Kraft from the University of Delaware and John V. Luce from Trinity College, Dublin presented the results^{[214][215][216]} of investigations into the geology of the region that had started in 1977. The geologists compared the present geology with the landscapes and coastal features described in the *Iliad* and other classical sources, notably Strabo's *Geographia*. Their conclusion was that there is regularly a consistency between the location of Troy as identified by Schliemann (and other locations such as the Greek camp), the geological evidence, and descriptions of the topography and accounts of the battle in the *Iliad*.

In the twentieth century scholars have attempted to draw conclusions based on Hittite and Egyptian texts that date to the time of the Trojan War. While they give a general description of the political situation in the region at the time, their information on whether this particular conflict took place is limited. Andrew Dalby notes that while the Trojan War most likely did take place in some form and is therefore grounded in history, its true nature is and will be unknown.^[217] Hittite archives, like the Tawagalawa letter mention of a kingdom of *Ahhiyawa* (Achaea, or Greece) that lies beyond the sea (that would be the Aegean) and controls Milliwanda, which is identified with Miletus. Also mentioned in this and other letters is the Assuwa confederation made of 22 cities and countries which included the city of *Wilusa* (Ilios or Ilium). The Milawata letter implies this city lies on the north of the Assuwa confederation, beyond the Seha river. While the identification of Wilusa with Ilium (that is, Troy) is always controversial, in the 1990s it gained majority acceptance. In the Alaksandu treaty (ca. 1280 BC) the king of the city is named Alakasandu, and Paris's son of Priam's name in the *Iliad* (among other works) is Alexander. The Tawagalawa letter (dated ca. 1250 BC) which is addressed to the king of Ahhiyawa actually says:

Now as we have come to an agreement on Wilusa over which we went to war...

Formerly under the Hittites, the Assuwa confederation defected after the battle of Kadesh between Egypt and the Hittites (ca. 1274 BC). In 1230 BC Hittite king Tudhaliya IV (ca. 1240–1210 BC) campaigned against this federation. Under Arnuwanda III (ca. 1210–1205 BC) the Hittites were forced to abandon the lands they controlled in the coast of the Aegean. It is possible that the Trojan War was a conflict between the king of Ahhiyawa and the

Assuwa confederation. This view has been supported in that the entire war includes the landing in Mysia (and Telephus' wounding), Achilles's campaigns in the North Aegean and Telamonian Ajax's campaigns in Thrace and Phrygia. Most of these regions were part of Assuwa.^{[70][218]} It has also been noted that there is great similarity between the names of the Sea Peoples, which at that time were raiding Egypt, as they are listed by Ramesses III and Merneptah, and of the allies of the Trojans.^[219]

That most Achean heroes did not return to their homes and founded colonies elsewhere was interpreted by Thucydides as being due to their long absence.^[220] Nowadays the interpretation followed by most scholars is that the Achean leaders driven out of their lands by the turmoil at the end of the Mycenaean era preferred to claim descentance from exiles of the Trojan War.^[221]

Popular culture

A full listing of works inspired by the Trojan War has not been attempted, since the inspiration provided by these events produced so many works that a list that merely mentions them by name would be larger than the full tale of the events of the war. The siege of Troy provided inspiration for many works of art, most famously Homer's *Iliad*, set in the last year of the siege. Some of the others include *Troades* by Euripides, *Troilus and Criseyde* by Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Cressida* by William Shakespeare, *Iphigenia* and *Polyxena* by Samuel Coster, *Palamedes* by Joost van den Vondel and *Les Troyens* by Hector Berlioz.

Films based on the Trojan War include *Troy* (2004). The war has also been featured in many books, television series, and other creative works.

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- [2] Rutter, Jeremy B.. "Troy VII and the Historicity of the Trojan War" (http://projectsx.dartmouth.edu/classics/history/bronze_age/lessons/les/27.html). . Retrieved 2007-07-23.
- [3] In the second edition of his *In Search of the Trojan War*, Michael Wood notes developments that were made in the intervening ten years since his first edition was published. Scholarly skepticism about Schliemann's identification has been dispelled by the more recent archaeological discoveries, linguistic research, and translations of clay-tablet records of contemporaneous diplomacy. Wood, Michael (1998). "Preface". *In Search of the Trojan War* (2 ed.). Berkley, CA: University of California Press. p. 4. ISBN 0-520-21599-0. "Now, more than ever, in the 125 years since Schliemann put his spade into Hisarlik, there appears to be a historical basis to the tale of Troy"
- [4] Wood (1985: 116–118)
- [5] Wood (1985: 19)
- [6] It is unknown whether this Proclus is the Neoplatonic philosopher, in which case the summary dates to the 5th century AD, or whether he is the lesser-known grammarian of the 2nd century AD. See Burgess, p. 12.
- [7] Burgess, pp. 10–12; cf. W. Kullmann (1960), *Die Quellen der Ilias*.
- [8] Burgess, pp. 3–4.
- [9] Scholium on Homer A.5.
- [10] Plato, *Republic* 2,379e.
- [11] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3.1, Hesiod Fragment 204,95ff.
- [12] Apollonius Rhodius 4.757.
- [13] Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 767.
- [14] Scholiast on Homer's *Iliad*; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 54; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 11.217.
- [15] Apollodorus, *Library* 3.168.
- [16] Pindar, *Nemean* 5 ep2; Pindar, *Isthmian* 8 str3–str5.
- [17] Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women* fr. 57; *Cypria* fr. 4.
- [18] Photius, *Myrobiblion* 190.
- [19] P.Oxy. 56, 3829 (L. Koppel, 1989)
- [20] Hyginus, *Fabulae* 92.
- [21] Apollodorus *Epitome* E.3.2
- [22] Pausanias, 15.9.5.
- [23] Euripides *Andromache* 298; Div. i. 21; Apollodorus, *Library* 3.12.5.
- [24] Homer *Iliad* I.410

- [25] Apollodorus, *Library* 3.174.
- [26] Apollonius Rhodius 4.869–879 (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/argo/argo49.htm#4.865-884>); Apollodorus, *Library* 3.13.6 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Apollod.+3.13.6>).
- [27] Frazer on Apollodorus, *Library* 3.13.6 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Apollod.+3.13.6>).
- [28] Alluded to in Statius, *Achilleid* 1.269–270 (<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/statius/achilleid1.shtml>).
- [29] Hyginus, *Fabulae* 96.
- [30] Apollodorus 3.10.7.
- [31] Pausanias 1.33.1; Apollodorus, *Library* 3.10.7.
- [32] Apollodorus, *Library* 3.10.5; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 77.
- [33] Apollodorus, *Library* 3.10.9.
- [34] Pausanias 3.20.9.
- [35] Ptolemy Hephaestion, *New History* 4 (as summarized in Photius, *Myriobiblon* 190).
- [36] Pindar, *Pythian* 11 ep4; Apollodorus, *Library* 3.11.15.
- [37] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 2.15.
- [38] Proclus Chrestomathy 1
- [39] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3.3.
- [40] Euripides, *Helen* 40.
- [41] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3.4.
- [42] Herodotus, *Histories* 1.2.
- [43] Apollodorus, *Library* 3.12.7.
- [44] Herodotus, 1.3.1.
- [45] Il. 3.205-6; 11.139
- [46] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3.6.
- [47] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3.7.
- [48] Il.11.767-70, (lines rejected by Aristophanes and Aristarchus)
- [49] Statius, *Achilleid* 1.25
- [50] Apollodorus, *Library* 3.13.8.
- [51] Scholiast on Homer's *Iliad* 19.326; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 13.162 ff.
- [52] Pausanias, 1.22.6.
- [53] Homer, *Iliad* 11.19 ff.; Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3.9.
- [54] Philostratus, *Heroicus* 7.
- [55] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3.15.
- [56] Pausanias, 1.4.6.
- [57] Pindar, *Isthmian* 8.
- [58] Pausanias, 9.5.14.
- [59] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3.20.
- [60] Aeschylus fragment 405–410
- [61] Pliny, *Natural History* 24.42, 34.152.
- [62] Davies, esp. pp. 8, 10.
- [63] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3.19.
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- [65] Antoninus Liberalis, *Metamorphoses* 27.
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- [81] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3.31.
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- [83] Eustathius on Homer, *Iliad* ii.701.
- [84] Scholiast on Lycophron 532.
- [85] Thucydides 1.11.
- [86] Papademetriou Konstantinos, "Τα όπλα του Τρωϊκού Πολέμου" ("The weapons of the Trojan War"), Panzer Magazine issue 14, June–July 2004, Athens.
- [87] *Iliad* I.328
- [88] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3.32.
- [89] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3.33; translation, Sir James George Frazer.
- [90] Volume 5 p.80
- [91] Demetrius (2nd century BC) Scholium on *Iliad* Z,35
- [92] Parthenius Ερωτικά Παθήματα 21
- [93] Apollodorus, *Library* 3.12.5.
- [94] Homer, *Iliad* Φ 35–155.
- [95] Dictys Cretensis ii. 18; Sophocles, *Ajax* 210.
- [96] "Petteia". (<http://www.personal.psu.edu/wxk116/roma/petteia.html>)
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- [99] Kakrides vol. 5 p. 92.
- [100] Servius, Scholium on Virgil's *Aeneid* 2.81
- [101] According to other accounts Odysseus, with the other Greek captains, including Agamemnon, conspired together against Palamedes, as all were envious of his accomplishments. See Simpson, *Gods & Heroes of the Greeks: The Library of Apollodorus*, p. 251.
- [102] According to Apollodorus *Epitome* 3.8, Odysseus forced a Phrygian prisoner, to write the letter.
- [103] Pausanias 10.31.2; Simpson, *Gods & Heroes of the Greeks: The Library of Apollodorus*, p. 251.
- [104] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 6.9.
- [105] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3.10
- [106] The exact nature of Achilles' relationship to Patroclus is the subject of some debate. See Achilles and Patroclus for details.
- [107] Scholiast on Homer, *Iliad*. xxiv. 804.
- [108] Quintus of Smyrna, *Posthomerica* i.18 ff.
- [109] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.1.
- [110] Pausanias 3.26.9.
- [111] Ptolemy Hephaestion, *New History* Bk6 (as summarized in Photius, *Myriobiblon* 190)
- [112] Proclus, *Chrestomathy* 2, *Aethiopsis*.
- [113] Tzetzes, *Scholiast on Lycophron* 999.
- [114] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.3.
- [115] Tzetzes ad Lycophron 18.
- [116] Pausanias 10.31.7.
- [117] Dictys Cretensis iv. 4.
- [118] Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.372.
- [119] Pindarus *Pythian* vi. 30.
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- [123] Euripides, *Hecuba* 40.
- [124] Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica* iv. 88–595.
- [125] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.5.
- [126] Pausanias 3.19.13.
- [127] Argument of Sophocles' *Ajax*
- [128] Scholiast on Homer's *Odyssey* λ.547.
- [129] Homer, *Odyssey* λ 542.
- [130] Proclus, *Chrestomathy* 3, *Little Iliad*.
- [131] Pindar, *Nemean Odes* 8.46(25).
- [132] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.6.
- [133] Zenobius, *Cent.* i.43.
- [134] Sophocles, *Ajax* 42, 277, 852.
- [135] Either by Calchas, (Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.8; Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica* 9.325–479), or by Paris' brother Helenus (Proclus, *Chrestomathy* 3, *Little Iliad*; Sophocles, *Philoctetes* 604–613; Tzetzes, *Posthomerica* 571–595).
- [136] This is according to Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.8, Hyginus, *Fabulae* 103, Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica* 9.325–479, and Euripides, *Philoctetes*—but Sophocles, *Philoctetes* says Odysseus and Neoptolemus, while Proclus, *Chrestomathy* 3, *Little Iliad* says Diomedes alone.

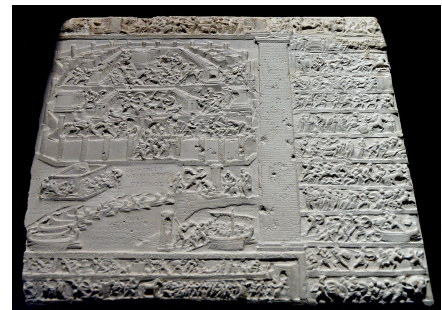
- [137] Philoctetes was cured by a son of Asclepius, either Machaon, (Proclus, *Chrestomathy* 3, *Little Iliad*; Tzetzes, *Posthomerica* 571–595) or his brother Podalirius (Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.8; Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica* 9.325–479).
- [138] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.9.
- [139] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.10; Pausanias 5.13.4.
- [140] Pausanias 5.13.4–6, says that Pelop's shoulder-blade was brought to Troy from Pisa, and on its return home was lost at sea, later to be found by a fisherman, and identified as Pelop's by the Oracle at Delphi.
- [141] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.11.
- [142] *Odyssey* λ.520
- [143] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.12.
- [144] Pausanias 9.5.15.
- [145] Homer, *Odyssey* 4.242 ff.
- [146] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.13.
- [147] Homer, *Odyssey* 8.492–495; Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.14.
- [148] Pausanias, 3.13.5.
- [149] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.15, Simpson, p 246.
- [150] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.14, says the hollow horse held 50, but attributes to the author of the *Little Iliad* a figure of 3,000, a number that Simpson, p 265, calls "absurd", saying that the surviving fragments only say that the Greeks put their "best men" inside the horse. Tzetzes, *Posthomerica* 641–650, gives a figure of 23, while Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica* xii.314–335, gives the names of thirty, and says that there were more. In late tradition it seems it was standardized at 40.
- [151] Homer, *Odyssey* 8.500–504; Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.15.
- [152] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.16, as translated by Simpson, p. 246. Proculus, *Chrestomathy* 3, *Little Iliad*, says that the Trojans pulled down a part of their walls to admit the horse.
- [153] Proclus, *Chrestomathy* 4, *Iliou Persis*.
- [154] Homer, *Odyssey* 8.505 ff.; Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.16–15.
- [155] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.17 says that Cassandra warned of an armed force inside the horse, and that Laocoön agreed.
- [156] Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.199–227; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 135;
- [157] Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica* xii.444–497; Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.18.
- [158] Scholiast on Lycophroon, 344.
- [159] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.19–20.
- [160] Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica* xiii.100–104, Translation by A.S. Way, 1913.
- [161] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.21.
- [162] Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 155; Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica* xiii.423–457.
- [163] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.22.
- [164] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.22; Pausanias 10.31.2; Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica* xiii.462–473; Virgil, *Aeneid* 403–406. The rape of Cassandra was a popular theme of ancient Greek paintings, see Pausanias, 1.15.2, 5.11.6, 5.19.5, 10.26.3.
- [165] Homer, *Iliad* 3.203–207, 7.347–353; Apollodorus, *Epitome*, 5.21; Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica* xiii.322–331, Livy, 1.1; Pausanias, 10.26.8, 27.3 ff.; Strabo, 13.1.53.
- [166] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.23.
- [167] Proclus, *Chrestomathy* 4, *Iliou Persis*, says Odysseus killed Astyanax, while Pausanias, 10.25.9, says Neoptolemus.
- [168] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.23.
- [169] Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica* xiii.279–285.
- [170] Euripides, *Trojan Women* 709–739, 1133–1135; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 109.
- [171] Euripides, *Hecuba* 107–125, 218–224, 391–393, 521–582; Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica* xiv.193–328.
- [172] Homer, *Iliad* 3.144.
- [173] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.22; Pausanias, 10.25.8; Quintus Smyrnaeus, *Posthomerica* xiii.547–595.
- [174] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 6.11.
- [175] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 5.24.
- [176] Strabo, 6.1.15.
- [177] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 6.6.
- [178] Scholiast on Homer, *Iliad* 13.66.
- [179] Pausanias, 1.28.11.
- [180] Pausanias, 8.15.7
- [181] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 6.12
- [182] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 6.13.
- [183] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 6.14.
- [184] Plutarch, 23.
- [185] Pausanias, 1.28.9.
- [186] Tzetzes ad Lycophroon 609.
- [187] Strabo, 6.3.9.

- [188] Strabo, 6.1.3.
- [189] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 6.15b; Strabo, 6.1.3.
- [190] Homer, *Odyssey* 3.191.
- [191] Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.400
- [192] Scholiast on Homer's *Odyssey* 13.259.
- [193] Homer, *Odyssey* 4.360.
- [194] Homer, *Odyssey* 4.382.
- [195] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 6.29.
- [196] Pausanias, 2.16.6.
- [197] Apollodorus, *Epitome* 6.23.
- [198] Homer, *Odyssey* 1.30, 298.
- [199] Pausanias, 2.16.7.
- [200] Sophocles, *Electra* 1405.
- [201] Proclus *Chrestomathy* 2, *Telegony*
- [202] FGrHist 70 F 223
- [203] FGrHist 595 F 1
- [204] Chronographiai FGrHist 241 F 1d
- [205] FGrHist 566 F 125
- [206] FGrHist 239, §24
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Tabula Iliaca, a 1st-century BC Roman bas-relief depicting scenes from Trojan War narratives

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- BBC audio podcast (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01j6srl>) Melvyn Bragg interviews Edith Hall and others on historicity, history and archaeology of the war. [Play (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/player/b01j6srl>)]

Achilles

In Greek mythology, **Achilles** (Ancient Greek: Ἀχιλλεύς, *Akhilleus*, pronounced [akʰillɛ̌ws]) was a Greek hero of the Trojan War, the central character and the greatest warrior of Homer's *Iliad*.

Later legends (beginning with a poem by Statius in the 1st century AD) state that Achilles was invulnerable in all of his body except for his heel. As he died because of a small wound on his heel, the term *Achilles' heel* has come to mean one's point of weakness.

Etymology

Achilles' name can be analyzed as a combination of ἄχος (*akhos*) "grief" and λαός (*Laos*) "a people, tribe,



Achilles and the Nereid Cymothoe: Attic red-figure kantharos from Volci (Cabinet des Médailles, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris)

nation, etc." In other words, Achilles is an embodiment of the grief of the people, grief being a theme raised numerous times in the *Iliad* (frequently by Achilles). Achilles' role as the hero of grief forms an ironic juxtaposition with the conventional view of Achilles as the hero of *kleos* (glory, usually glory in war).

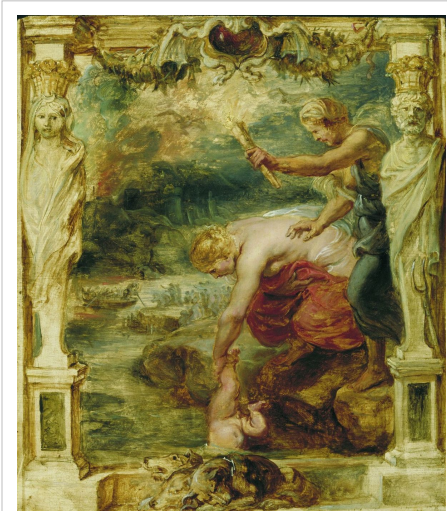
Laos has been construed by Gregory Nagy, following Leonard Palmer, to mean *a corps of soldiers*, a muster. With this derivation, the name would have a double meaning in the poem: When the hero is functioning rightly, his men bring grief to the enemy, but when wrongly, his men get the grief of war. The poem is in part about the misdirection of anger on the part of leadership.

The name Achilleus was a common and attested name among the Greeks soon after the 7th century BC.^[1] It was also turned into the female form Ἀχιλλεία (*Achilleía*) attested in Attica in the 4th century BC (IG II² 1617) and, in the form *Achillia*, on a stele in Halicarnassus as the name of a female gladiator fighting an "Amazon". Roman gladiatorial games often referenced classical mythology, and this seems to reference Achilles' fight with Penthesilea but gives it an extra twist of Achilles' being "played" by a woman.

Birth

Achilles was the son of the nymph Thetis and Peleus, the king of the Myrmidons. Zeus and Poseidon had been rivals for the hand of Thetis until Prometheus, the fore-thinker, warned Zeus of a prophecy that Thetis would bear a son greater than his father. For this reason, the two gods withdrew their pursuit, and had her wed Peleus.^[2]

As with most mythology, there is a tale which offers an alternative version of these events: in *Argonautica* (iv.760) Zeus' sister and wife Hera alludes to Thetis' chaste resistance to the advances of Zeus, that Thetis was so loyal to Hera's marriage bond that she coolly rejected him. Thetis, although a daughter of the sea-god Nereus, was also brought up by Hera, further explaining her resistance to the advances of Zeus.



Thetis Dipping the Infant Achilles into the River Styx (ca. 1625), Peter Paul Rubens



The Education of Achilles (ca. 1772), by James Barry

According to the *Achilleid*, written by Statius in the 1st century AD, and to no surviving previous sources, when Achilles was born Thetis tried to make him immortal, by dipping him in the river Styx. However, he was left vulnerable at the part of the body by which she held him, his heel^[3] (see Achilles heel, Achilles' tendon). It is not clear if this version of events was known earlier. In another version of this story, Thetis anointed the boy in ambrosia and put him on top of a fire, to burn away the mortal parts of his body. She was interrupted by Peleus and abandoned both father and son in a rage.^[4]

However, none of the sources before Statius makes any reference to this general invulnerability. To the contrary, in the *Iliad* Homer mentions Achilles being wounded: in Book 21 the Paeonian hero

Asteropaeus, son of Pelagon, challenged Achilles by the river Scamander. He cast two spears at once, one grazed Achilles' elbow, "drawing a spurt of blood".

Also, in the fragmentary poems of the Epic Cycle in which we can find description of the hero's death, *Cypria* (unknown author), *Aithiopis* by Arctinus of Miletus, *Little Iliad* by Lesche of Mytilene, *Iliou persis* by Arctinus of Miletus, there is no trace of any reference to his general invulnerability or his famous weakness (heel); in the later vase paintings presenting Achilles' death, the arrow (or in many cases, arrows) hit his body.

Peleus entrusted Achilles to Chiron the Centaur, on Mt. Pelion, to be reared.^[5]

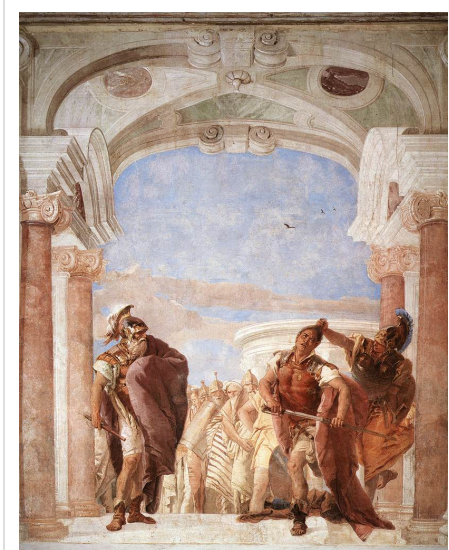
Achilles in the Trojan War

The first two lines of the *Iliad* read:

μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος
 οὐλομένην, ἣ μυρὶ Ἀχαιοῖς ἄλγε' ἔθηκεν,
 Sing, Goddess, of the rage of Peleus' son Achilles,
 the accursed rage that brought great suffering to the Achaeans.

Achilles' consuming rage is at times wavering, but at other times he cannot be cooled. The humanization of Achilles by the events of the war is an important theme of the narrative.

According to the *Iliad*, Achilles arrived at Troy with 50 ships, each carrying 50 Myrmidons (Book 2). He appointed five leaders (each leader commanding 500 Myrmidons): Menesthius, Eudorus, Peisander, Phoenix and Alcimedon (Book 16).



The Rage of Achilles, by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo

Telephus

When the Greeks left for the Trojan War, they accidentally stopped in Mysia, ruled by King Telephus. In the resulting battle, Achilles gave Telephus a wound that would not heal; Telephus consulted an oracle, who stated that "he that wounded shall heal". Guided by the oracle, he arrived at Argos, where Achilles healed him in order that he might become their guide for the voyage to Troy.

According to other reports in Euripides' lost play about Telephus, he went to Aulis pretending to be a beggar and asked Achilles to heal his wound. Achilles refused, claiming to have no medical knowledge. Alternatively, Telephus held Orestes for ransom, the ransom being Achilles' aid in healing the wound. Odysseus reasoned that the spear had inflicted the wound; therefore, the spear must be able to heal it. Pieces of the spear were scraped off onto the wound and Telephus was healed.

Troilus

According to the *Cypria* (the part of the Epic Cycle that tells the events of the Trojan War before Achilles' Wrath), when the Achaeans desired to return home, they were restrained by Achilles, who afterwards attacked the cattle of Aeneas, sacked neighboring cities and killed Troilus.^[6]

According to Dares Phrygius' *Account of the Destruction of Troy*,^[7] the Latin summary through which the story of Achilles was transmitted to medieval Europe, Troilus was a young Trojan prince, the youngest of King Priam's (or sometimes Apollo) and Hecuba's five legitimate sons. Despite his youth, he was one of the main Trojan war leaders. Prophecies linked Troilus' fate to that of Troy and so he was ambushed in an attempt to capture him. Yet Achilles, struck by the beauty of both Troilus and his sister Polyxena, and overcome with lust, directed his sexual attentions on the youth – who refusing to yield found instead himself decapitated upon an altar-omphalos of Apollo. Later versions of the story suggested Troilus was accidentally killed by Achilles in an over-ardent lovers' embrace. In this version of the myth, Achilles' death therefore came in retribution for this sacrilege.^[8] Ancient writers treated Troilus as the epitome of a dead child mourned by his parents. Had Troilus lived to adulthood, the First Vatican

Mythographer claimed Troy would have been invincible.

Achilles in the *Iliad*

Homer's *Iliad* is the most famous narrative of Achilles' deeds in the Trojan War. Achilles' wrath is the central theme of the book. The Homeric epic only covers a few weeks of the war, and does not narrate Achilles' death. It begins with Achilles' withdrawal from battle after he is dishonored by Agamemnon, the commander of the Achaean forces. Agamemnon had taken a woman named Chryseis as his slave. Her father Chryses, a priest of Apollo, begged Agamemnon to return her to him. Agamemnon refused and Apollo sent a plague amongst the Greeks. The prophet Calchas correctly determined the source of the troubles but would not speak unless Achilles vowed to protect him.

Achilles did so and Calchas declared Chryseis must be returned to her father. Agamemnon consented, but then commanded that Achilles' battle prize Briseis be brought to replace Chryseis. Angry at the dishonor (and as he says later, because he loved Briseis)^[9] and at the urging of his mother Thetis, Achilles refused to fight or lead his troops alongside the other Greek forces. At this same time, burning with rage over Agamemnon's theft, Achilles prayed to Thetis to convince Zeus to help the Trojans gain ground in the war, so that he may regain his honor.

As the battle turned against the Greeks, thanks to the influence of Zeus, Nestor declared that the Trojans were winning because Agamemnon had angered Achilles, and urged the king to appease the warrior. Agamemnon agreed and sent Odysseus and two other chieftains, Ajax and Phoenix, to Achilles with the offer of the return of Briseis and other gifts. Achilles rejected all Agamemnon offered him, and simply urged the Greeks to sail home as he was planning to do.

The Trojans, led by Hector, subsequently pushed the Greek army back toward the beaches and assaulted the Greek ships. With the Greek forces on the verge of absolute destruction, Patroclus led the Myrmidons into battle wearing Achilles' armor, though Achilles remained at his camp. Patroclus succeeded in pushing the Trojans back from the beaches, but was killed by Hector before he could lead a proper assault on the city of Troy.



Triumphant Achilles dragging Hector's lifeless body in front of the Gates of Troy (from a panoramic fresco on the upper level of the main hall of the Achilleion).



Achilles sacrificing to Zeus, from the Ambrosian *Iliad*, a 5th-century illuminated manuscript

After receiving the news of the death of Patroclus from Antilochus, the son of Nestor, Achilles grieved over his beloved companion's death and held many funeral games in his honor. His mother Thetis came to comfort the distraught Achilles. She persuaded Hephaestus to make a new armor for him, in place of the armor that Patroclus had been wearing which was taken by Hector. The new armor included the Shield of Achilles, described in great detail by the poet.

Enraged over the death of Patroclus, Achilles ended his refusal to fight and took the field killing many men in his rage but always seeking out Hector. Achilles even engaged in battle with the river god Scamander who became angry that Achilles was choking his waters with all the men he killed. The god tried to drown Achilles but was stopped by Hera and Hephaestus. Zeus himself took note of Achilles' rage and sent the gods to restrain him so that he would not go on to sack Troy itself, seeming to show that the unhindered rage of Achilles could defy fate itself as Troy was not meant to be destroyed yet. Finally, Achilles found his prey. Achilles chased Hector around the wall of

Troy three times before Athena, in the form of Hector's favorite and dearest brother, Deiphobus, persuaded Hector to stop running and fight Achilles face to face. After Hector realized the trick, he knew the battle was inevitable. Wanting to go down fighting, he charged at Achilles with his only weapon, his sword, but missed. Accepting his fate, Hector begged Achilles, not to spare his life, but to treat his body with respect after killing him. Achilles told Hector it was hopeless to expect that of him, declaring that "my rage, my fury would drive me now to hack your flesh away and eat you raw – such agonies you have caused me".^[10] Achilles then got his vengeance.

With the assistance of the god Hermes, Hector's father, Priam, went to Achilles' tent to plead with Achilles to permit him to perform for Hector his funeral rites. The final passage in the *Iliad* is Hector's funeral, after which the doom of Troy was just a matter of time.

Penthesilea

Achilles, after his temporary truce with Priam, fought and killed the Amazonian warrior queen Penthesilea, but later grieved over her death. At first, he was so distracted by her beauty, he did not fight as intensely as usual. Once he realized that his distraction was endangering his life, he refocused and killed her. As he grieved over the death of such a rare beauty, a notorious Greek jeerer by the name of Thersites laughed and mocked the great Achilles. Annoyed by his insensitivity and disrespect, Achilles punched him in the face and killed him instantly.

Memnon, and the fall of Achilles

Following the death of Patroclus, Achilles' closest companion was Nestor's son Antilochus. When Memnon, king of Ethiopia slew Antilochus, Achilles once more obtained revenge on the battlefield, killing Memnon. The fight between Achilles and Memnon over Antilochus echoes that of Achilles and Hector over Patroclus, except that Memnon (unlike Hector) was also the son of a goddess.

Many Homeric scholars argued that episode inspired many details in the *Iliad*'s description of the death of Patroclus and Achilles' reaction to it. The episode then formed the basis of the cyclic epic *Aethiopis*, which was composed after the *Iliad*, possibly in the 7th century B.C. The *Aethiopis* is now lost, except for scattered fragments quoted by later authors.

The death of Achilles, as predicted by Hector with his dying breath, was brought about by Paris with an arrow (to the heel according to Statius). In some versions, the god Apollo guided Paris' arrow. Some retellings also state that Achilles was scaling the gates of Troy and was hit with a poisoned arrow.



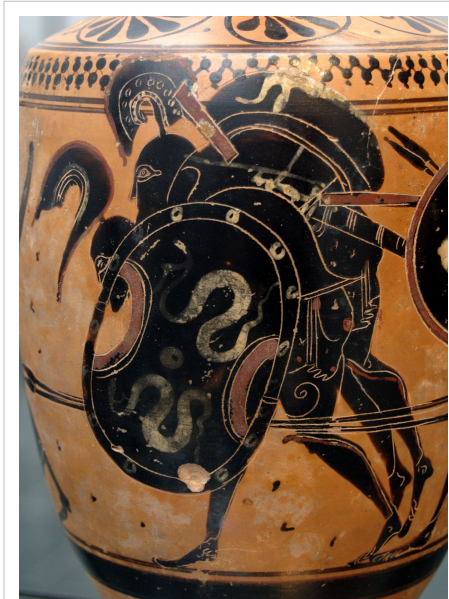
Achilles dying in the gardens of the Achilleion in Corfu

All of these versions deny Paris any sort of valor, owing to the common conception that Paris was a coward and not the man his brother Hector was, and Achilles remained undefeated on the battlefield. His bones were mingled with those of Patroclus, and funeral games were held. He was represented in the *Aethiopis* as living after his death in the island of Leuke at the mouth of the river Danube.

Another version of Achilles' death is that he fell deeply in love with one of the Trojan princesses, Polyxena. Achilles asks Priam for Polyxena's hand in marriage. Priam is willing because it would mean the end of the war and an alliance with the world's greatest warrior. But while Priam is overseeing the private marriage of Polyxena and Achilles, Paris, who would have to give up Helen if Achilles married his sister, hides in the bushes and shoots Achilles with a divine arrow, killing him.

Achilles was cremated and his ashes buried in the same urn as those of Patroclus.^[11]

Paris was later killed by Philoctetes using the enormous bow of Heracles.



Ajax carries off the body of Achilles: Attic black-figure *lekythos*, ca. 510 BC, from Sicily (Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich)

Fate of Achilles' armor

Achilles' armor was the object of a feud between Odysseus and Telamonian Ajax (Ajax the greater). They competed for it by giving speeches on why they were the bravest after Achilles to their Trojan prisoners, who after considering both men came to a consensus in favor of Odysseus. Furious, Ajax cursed Odysseus, which earned the ire of Athena. Athena temporarily made Ajax so mad with grief and anguish that he began killing sheep, thinking them his comrades. After a while, when Athena lifted his madness and Ajax realized that he had actually been killing sheep, Ajax was left so ashamed that he committed suicide. Odysseus eventually gave the armor to Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles.

A relic claimed to be Achilles' bronze-headed spear was for centuries preserved in the temple of Athena on the acropolis of Phaselis, Lycia, a port on the Pamphylian Gulf. The city was visited in 333 BC by Alexander the Great, who envisioned himself as the new Achilles and carried the *Iliad* with him, but his court biographers do not mention the spear, which he would indeed have touched with excitement.^[12] But it was being shown in the time of Pausanias in the 2nd century AD.^[13]

Achilles and Patroclus

The exact nature of Achilles' relationship with Patroclus has been a subject of dispute in both the classical period and modern times. In the *Iliad*, it appears to be the model of a deep and loyal friendship, but commentators from classical antiquity to the present have often interpreted the relationship through the lens of their own cultures. In 5th-century BC Athens, the intense bond was often viewed in light of the Greek custom of *paiderasteia*. In Plato's *Symposium*, the participants in a dialogue about love debate assume that Achilles and Patroclus were a couple; Phaedrus argues that Achilles was the younger and more beautiful one so he was the beloved and Patroclus was the lover.^[14] But ancient Greek had no words to distinguish "heterosexual" and "homosexual,"^[15] and it was assumed that a man could both desire handsome young men and have sex with women. Although epic decorum excluded explicit sexuality, the *Iliad* indicates that Achilles had sexual relations with women, with no direct evidence of sexual behaviors with Patroclus. In the 2004 film *Troy*, Achilles and Patroclus were cousins.

Worship of Achilles in antiquity

There was an archaic heroic cult of Achilles on the White Island, *Leuce*, in the Black Sea off the modern coasts of Romania and Ukraine, with a temple and an oracle which survived into the Roman period.^[16]

In the lost epic *Aithiopis*, a continuation of the *Iliad* attributed to Arktinus of Miletos, Achilles' mother Thetis returned to mourn him and removed his ashes from the pyre and took them to Leuce at the mouths of the Danube. There the Achaeans raised a tumulus for him and celebrated funeral games.

Pliny's *Natural History* (IV.27.1) mentions a tumulus that is no longer evident (*Insula Akchillis tumulo eius viri clara*), on the island consecrated to him, located at a distance of fifty Roman miles from Peuce by the Danube Delta, and the temple there. Pausanias has been told that the island is "covered with forests and full of animals, some wild, some tame. In this island there is also Achilles' temple and his statue" (III.19.11). Ruins of a square temple 30 meters to a side, possibly that dedicated to Achilles, were discovered by Captain Kritzikly in 1823, but there has been no modern archeological work done on the island.

Pomponius Mela tells that Achilles is buried in the island named Achillea, between Boristhene and Ister (*De situ orbis*, II, 7). The Greek geographer Dionysius Periegetus of Bithynia, who lived at the time of Domitian, writes that the island was called *Leuce* "because the wild animals which live there are white. It is said that there, in Leuce island, reside the souls of Achilles and other heroes, and that they wander through the uninhabited valleys of this island; this is how Jove rewarded the men who had distinguished themselves through their virtues, because through virtue they had acquired everlasting honor".^[17]

The *Periplus of the Euxine Sea* gives the following details: "It is said that the goddess Thetis raised this island from the sea, for her son Achilles, who dwells there. Here is his temple and his statue, an archaic work. This island is not inhabited, and goats graze on it, not many, which the people who happen to arrive here with their ships, sacrifice to Achilles. In this temple are also deposited a great many holy gifts, craters, rings and precious stones, offered to Achilles in gratitude. One can still read inscriptions in Greek and Latin, in which Achilles is praised and celebrated. Some of these are worded in Patroclus' honor, because those who wish to be favored by Achilles, honor Patroclus at the same time. There are also in this island countless numbers of sea birds, which look after Achilles' temple. Every morning they fly out to sea, wet their wings with water, and return quickly to the temple and sprinkle it. And after they finish the sprinkling, they clean the hearth of the temple with their wings. Other people say still more, that some of the men who reach this island, come here intentionally. They bring animals in their ships, destined to be sacrificed. Some of these animals they slaughter, others they set free on the island, in Achilles' honor. But there are others, who are forced to come to this island by sea storms. As they have no sacrificial animals, but wish to get them from the god of the island himself, they consult Achilles' oracle. They ask permission to slaughter the victims chosen from among the animals that graze freely on the island, and to deposit in exchange the price which they consider fair. But in case the oracle denies them permission, because there is an oracle here, they add something to the price offered, and if the oracle refuses again, they add something more, until at last, the oracle agrees that the price is sufficient. And then the victim doesn't run away any more, but waits willingly to be caught. So, there is a great quantity of silver there, consecrated to the hero, as price for the sacrificial victims. To some of the people who come to this island, Achilles appears in dreams, to others he would appear even during their navigation, if they were not



Achilles and Briseis

too far away, and would instruct them as to which part of the island they would better anchor their ships". (quoted in Densușianu)

The heroic cult of Achilles on Leuce island was widespread in antiquity, not only along the sea lanes of the Pontic Sea but also in maritime cities whose economic interests were tightly connected to the riches of the Black Sea.

Achilles from Leuce island was venerated as *Pontarches* the lord and master of the Pontic Sea, the protector of sailors and navigation. Sailors went out of their way to offer sacrifice. To Achilles of Leuce were dedicated a number of important commercial port cities of the Greek waters: Achilleion in Messenia (Stephanus Byzantinus), Achilleios in Laconia (Pausanias, III.25,4) Nicolae Densușianu (Densușianu 1913) even though he recognized Achilles in the name of Aquileia and in the north arm of the Danube delta, the arm of Chilia ("Achileii"), though his conclusion, that Leuce had sovereign rights over Pontos, evokes modern rather than archaic sea-law."

Leuce had also a reputation as a place of healing. Pausanias (III.19,13) reports that the Delphic Pythia sent a lord of Croton to be cured of a chest wound. Ammianus Marcellinus (XXII.8) attributes the healing to waters (*aquae*) on the island.

Worship of Achilles in modern times: The Achilleion in Corfu

In the region of Gastouri (Γαστούρι) to the south of the city of Corfu Greece, Empress of Austria Elisabeth of Bavaria also known as Sissi built in 1890 a summer palace with Achilles as its central theme and it is a monument to platonic romanticism. The palace, naturally, was named after Achilles: *Achilleion* (Αχίλλειον). This elegant structure abounds with paintings and statues of Achilles both in the main hall and in the lavish gardens depicting the heroic and tragic scenes of the Trojan war.

Other stories



Achilles as guardian of the palace in the gardens of the Achilleion in Corfu. He gazes northward toward the city. The inscription in Greek reads: ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥΣ i.e. Achilles

Some post-Homeric sources claim that in order to keep Achilles safe from the war, Thetis (or, in some versions, Peleus) hides the young man at the court of Lycomedes, king of Skyros. There, Achilles is disguised as a girl and lives among Lycomedes' daughters, perhaps under the name "Pyrrha" (the red-haired girl). With Lycomedes' daughter Deidamia, whom in the account of Statius he rapes, Achilles there fathers a son, Neoptolemus (also called Pyrrhus, after his father's possible alias). According to this story, Odysseus learns from the prophet Calchas that the Achaeans would be unable to capture Troy without Achilles' aid. Odysseus goes to Skyros in the guise of a peddler selling women's clothes and jewelry and places a shield and spear among his goods. When Achilles instantly takes up the spear, Odysseus sees through his disguise and convinces him to join the Greek campaign. In another version of the story, Odysseus arranges for a trumpet alarm to be sounded while he was with Lycomedes' women; while the women flee in panic, Achilles prepares to defend the court, thus giving his identity away.^[18]

In book 11 of Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus sails to the underworld and converses with the shades. One of these is Achilles, who when greeted as "blessed in life, blessed in death", responds that he would rather be a slave to the worst of masters than be king of all the dead. But Achilles then asks Odysseus of his son's exploits in the Trojan war, and when Odysseus tells of Neoptolemus' heroic actions, Achilles is filled with satisfaction. This leaves the reader with an ambiguous understanding of how Achilles felt about the heroic life. Achilles was worshipped as a sea-god in many of the Greek

colonies on the Black Sea, the location of the mythical "White Island" which he was said to inhabit after his death, together with many other heroes.

The kings of the Epirus claimed to be descended from Achilles through his son, Neoptolemus. Alexander the Great, son of the Epirote princess Olympias, could therefore also claim this descent, and in many ways strove to be like his great ancestor. He is said to have visited the tomb of Achilles at Achilleion while passing Troy.^[19] In AD 216 the Roman Emperor Caracalla, while on his way to war against Parthia, emulated Alexander by holding games around Achilles' tumulus.^[20]

Achilles fought and killed the Amazon Helene. Some also said he married Medea, and that after both their deaths they were united in the Elysian Fields of Hades – as Hera promised Thetis in Apollonius' *Argonautica*. In some versions of the myth, Achilles has a relationship with his captive Briseis.

Achilles in Greek tragedy

The Greek tragedian Aeschylus wrote a trilogy of plays about Achilles, given the title *Achilleis* by modern scholars. The tragedies relate the deeds of Achilles during the Trojan War, including his defeat of Hector and eventual death when an arrow shot by Paris and guided by Apollo punctures his heel. Extant fragments of the *Achilleis* and other Aeschylean fragments have been assembled to produce a workable modern play. The first part of the *Achilleis* trilogy, *The Myrmidons*, focused on the relationship between Achilles and chorus, who represent the Achaean army and try to convince Achilles to give up his quarrel with Agamemnon; only a few lines survive today.^[21] In Plato's *Symposium*, Phaedrus points out that Aeschylus portrayed Achilles as the lover and Patroclus as the beloved; Phaedrus argues that this is incorrect because Achilles, being the younger and more beautiful of the two, was the beloved, who loved his lover so much that he chose to die to revenge him.^[22]

The tragedian Sophocles also wrote *The Lovers of Achilles*, a play with Achilles as the main character. Only a few fragments survive.

Achilles in Greek philosophy

The philosopher Zeno of Elea centered one of his paradoxes on an imaginary footrace between "swift-footed" Achilles and a tortoise, by which he attempted to show that Achilles could not catch up to a tortoise with a head start, and therefore that motion and change were impossible. As a student of the monist Parmenides and a member of the Eleatic school, Zeno believed time and motion to be illusions.

Achilles in later art

Drama

- Achilles is portrayed as a former hero who has become lazy and devoted to the love of Patroclus, in William Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*.

Fiction

- Achilles plays a part in the novel, *The Firebrand* by Marion Zimmer Bradley.
- In Aaron Allston's *Galatea in 2-D*, a painting of Achilles is one of those brought to life.
- Achilles appears in Dante's *Inferno*.
- Achilles is one of the beings who empower DC Comics hero Captain Marvel, giving him courage and later invulnerability.
- The ghost of Achilles appears in the Percy Jackson novel *The Last Olympian*, warning Percy that if he enters the river Styx, he will obtain great strength but also a greater weakness.
- Achilles is a central character in David Malouf's novel *Ransom* (2009).
- Achilles is a major character in P. C. Cast's sixth Goddess Summoning novel *Warrior Rising*. The novel centers on his relationship with Polyxena.
- Achilles is a major character in Madeline Miller's debut novel, *The Song of Achilles* (2011), which won the 2012 Orange Prize for Fiction. The novel explores the relationship between Patroclus and Achilles from boyhood to the fateful events of the *Iliad*.



The Wrath of Achilles, by François-Léon Benouville (1821–1859) (Musée Fabre)

Film

The role of Achilles has been played by:

- Piero Lulli in *Ulysses* (1955)
- Stanley Baker in *Helen of Troy* (1956)
- Riley Ottenhof in *Something about Zeus* (1958)
- Arturo Dominici in *La Guerra di Troia* (1962)
- Gordon Mitchell in *The Fury of Achilles* (1962)
- Derek Jacobi [voice] in *Achilles* (Channel Four Television) by Barry Purves (1995)
- Steve Davislim in *La Belle Hélène* (TV, 1996)
- Richard Trewett in the miniseries *The Odyssey* (TV, 1997)
- Joe Montana in *Helen of Troy* (TV, 2003)

- Brad Pitt in *Troy* (2004)

Music

Achilles has frequently been mentioned in music:

- Achilles is a hardcore band.
- "Achilles" is an oratorio by German composer Max Bruch (1885).
- "Achilles" is a song by Jag Panzer (*Casting the Stones*).
- "Achilles, Agony & Ecstasy In Eight Parts", by Manowar (*The Triumph of Steel*, 1992).
- "Achilles" is a song by New Jersey screamo band You and I.
- "Achilles: The Back Breaker" is a song by The Showdown.
- *Achilles Heel* is an album by Pedro the Lion.
- "Achilles' Heel" is a song by Toploader.
- "Achilles Last Stand", by Led Zeppelin (*Presence*, 1976).
- "Achilles' Revenge" is a song by Warlord.
- "Achilles' Wrath" is a concert piece by Sean O'Loughlin.
- Achilles' death is mentioned in the song "Helen and Cassandra" from the album "Last Days of the Century" by Al Stewart.
- Achilles is referred to in Bob Dylan's song "Temporary Like Achilles".
- Achilles is mentioned in the song "Third Temptation Of Paris", by Alesana.
- Achilles is mentioned in the song "The Mechanic", by 50 Cent.
- Achilles is mentioned in the song "57821", by Janelle Monáe ft. Deep Cotton.

Television

- In the animated television series *Class of the Titans*, one of the seven heroes, Archie, is descended from Achilles and has inherited both his vulnerable heel and part of his invincibility.

Poetry

- "Achilles in the Trench" is a famous poem by Patrick Shaw-Stewart.
- *The Triumph of Achilles* is Louise Glück's fourth collection of poetry.
- "The Shield of Achilles" is a notable work of W.H. Auden.
- Achilles is also mentioned in "War Music" by Christopher Logue, "Achilles' Song" by Robert Duncan, "Ars Poetica" by Eleanor Wilner, "Portrait of a Lady" by T.S. Eliot, and "Vietnam Epic Treatment" by Donald Revell.

Video games

- Achilles is central and playable character in KOEI's *Warriors: Legends of Troy*. He also appears as a guest character in KOEI's *Musou Orochi 2 (Warriors Orochi 3)*.

Namesakes

- The name of Achilles has been used for at least nine Royal Navy warships since 1744. A 60-gun ship of that name served at the Battle of Belleisle in 1761 while a 74-gun ship served at the Battle of Trafalgar. Other battle honours include Walcheren 1809. An armored cruiser of that name served in the Royal Navy during the First World War and was scrapped in 1921.
- HMNZS *Achilles* was a *Leander* class cruiser which served with the Royal New Zealand Navy in World War II. It became famous for its part in the Battle of the River Plate, alongside HMS *Ajax* and HMS *Exeter*. In addition to earning the battle honour 'River Plate', HMNZS Achilles also served at Guadalcanal 1942–43 and Okinawa in

1945. The ship was sold to the Indian Navy in 1948 but when she was scrapped parts of the ship were saved and preserved in New Zealand.

- Prince Achilleas-Andreas of Greece and Denmark, the grandson of the deposed Greek king, Constantine II.
- The character Achilles in Ender's Shadow, by Orson Scott Card. Achilles shares his namesake's cunning mind and ruthless attitude.
- In the Star Trek universe, the Achilles Class is an advanced type of Federation battleship brought into service at the outbreak of the Dominion War, though not seen in any of the canon Star Trek TV series.
- Achilles armor and valour is included in Titan Quest and TQ Immortal Throne.

Notes

- [1] Epigraphical database (http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/search? patt=*AXIL&first=250) gives 476 matches for Ἀχιλλῆ-. The earliest ones: Corinth 7th c. BC (<http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/oi?ikey=27810&bookid=6®ion=2&subregion=1>), Delphi 530 BC (<http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/oi?ikey=238250&bookid=118®ion=3&subregion=7>), Attica and Elis 5th c. BC.
- [2] Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 755–768; Pindar, *Nemean* 5.34–37, *Isthmian* 8.26–47; *Poeticon astronomicon* (ii.15)
- [3] Burgess, Jonathan S. (2009). *The Death and Afterlife of Achilles* (<http://books.google.com/?id=YVnS1IcVWuYC&pg=PA9&dq=Achilleid+dipped+Styx&cd=53#v=onepage&q=>). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. p. 9. ISBN 0-8018-9029-2. . Retrieved 5 February 2010.
- [4] Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* 4.869–879.
- [5] Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women*, fr. 204.87–89 MW; *Iliad* 11.830–32
- [6] "Proclus' Summary of the Cypria" (<http://www.stoa.org/hopper/text.jsp?doc=Stoa:text:2003.01.0004>). Stoa.org. . Retrieved 2010-03-09.
- [7] "Dares' account of the destruction of Troy, Greek Mythology Link" (<http://web.archive.org/web/20091229022803/http://homepage.mac.com/cparada/GML/DaresTW.html>). Homepage.mac.com. Archived from the original (<http://homepage.mac.com/cparada/GML/DaresTW.html>) on 29 December 2009. . Retrieved 2010-03-09.
- [8] James Davidson, "Zeus Be Nice Now" (http://www.lrb.co.uk/v29/n14/davi02_.html) in *London Review of Books*; 19 July 2007, accessed October 23, 2007
- [9] *Iliad* 9.334–343.
- [10] "The Iliad", Fagles translation. Penguin Books, 1991, p. 553.
- [11] Hamilton E. *Mythology*, New York: Penguin Books; 1969
- [12] "Alexander came to rest at Phaselis, a coastal city which was later renowned for the possession of Achilles' original spear." Robin Lane Fox, *Alexander the Great* 1973.144.
- [13] Pausanias, iii.3.6; see Christian Jacob and Anne Mullen-Hohl, "The Greek Traveler's Areas of Knowledge: Myths and Other Discourses in Pausanias' Description of Greece", *Yale French Studies* 59: Rethinking History: Time, Myth, and Writing (1980:65–85) esp. p. 81.
- [14] Plato, *Symposium*, 180a (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Plat.+Sym.+180a>); the beauty of Achilles was a topic already broached at *Iliad* 2.673–4.
- [15] Kenneth Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Harvard University Press, 1978, 1989), p. 1 *et passim*.
- [16] Guy Hedreen, "The Cult of Achilles in the Euxine" *Hesperia* 60.3 (July 1991), pp. 313–330.
- [17] *Orbis descriptio*, v. 541, quoted in Densușianu 1913
- [18] Philostratus Junior, *Imagines* i; Scholiast on Homer's *Iliad*, xix. 326; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 13.162ff., Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* iii. 13. 8, Statius, *Achilleid*, ii. 167ff.
- [19] Arrian, *Anabasis Alexandri* 1.12.1, Cicero, *Pro Archia Poeta* 24.
- [20] Dio Cassius 78.16.7.
- [21] Pantelis Michelakis, *Achilles in Greek Tragedy*, 2002, p. 22
- [22] Plato, *Symposium*, translated Benjamin Jowett, Dover Thrift Editions, page 8

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- Apollodorus, *Epitome* III, 14-V, 7
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External links

- Trojan War Resources (<http://www.historyguide.org/ancient/troy.html>)
- *Dacia Preistorică*, 1913, I.4 (http://www.pelasgians.bigpondhosting.com/website1/04_01.htm) Cult of Achilles: literary references to the island *Leucos* in Antiquity Nicolae Densușianu
- Gallery of the Ancient Art: Achilles (<http://ancientrome.ru/art/artworken/result.htm?alt=Achilles&pnumber=20>)

Patroclus

In Greek mythology, as recorded in Homer's *Iliad*, **Patroclus**, or **Patroklos** (Ancient Greek: Πάτροκλος *Patroklos* "glory of the father"), was the son of Menoetius, grandson of Actor, King of Opus, and was Achilles' beloved comrade and brother-in-arms.

Patroclus' genealogy

Menoetius was a member of the Argonauts in his youth. He had several marriages, and in different versions of the tale four different women are named as the mother of Patroclus. The *Bibliotheca* names three wives of Menoetius as possible mothers of Patroclus: Periopis, daughter of Pheres, founder of Pherae; Polymele, daughter of Peleus, King of Phthia and older half-sister of Achilles; and Sthenele, daughter of Acastus and Astydameia. Gaius Julius Hyginus names Philomela as Patroclus' mother.

Menoetius was a son of Actor, King of Opus in Locris by Aegina. Aegina was a daughter of Asopus and mother of Aeacus by Zeus. Aeacus was father of Peleus, Telamon and Phocus.

Actor was a son of Deioneus, King of Phocis and Diomedes. His paternal grandparents were Aeolus of Thessaly and Enarete. His maternal grandparents were Xuthus and Creusa, daughter of Erechtheus and Praxithea.

Life before the Trojan War

In his youth, Patroclus accidentally killed his friend, Clytonymus, during an argument over a game of dice. His father fled with Patroclus into exile to evade revenge, and they took shelter at the palace of their kinsman King Peleus of Phthia. There Patroclus apparently first met Peleus' son Achilles. Peleus sent the boys to live in the wilderness and be raised by Chiron, the cave-dwelling wise King of the Centaurs.

Patroclus was somewhat older than Achilles (*Iliad XI*, 780-790).

In a post-Homeric version, he is listed among the unsuccessful suitors of Helen of Sparta, all of whom took a solemn oath to defend the chosen husband against whoever should quarrel with him. At about that time Patroclus killed Las, founder of a namesake city near Gytheio, Laconia, according to Pausanias the geographer. Pausanias reported that the killing was alternatively attributed to Achilles. However Achilles was not otherwise said ever to have visited Peloponnesos.



A cup depicting Achilles bandaging Patroklos' arm, by the Sosias Painter.

Trojan War activities



The body of Patroclus is lifted by Menelaus and Meriones while Odysseus and others look on (*Etruscan relief, 2nd century BC*)

When the tide of war turned away from the Achaeans, and the Trojans threatened their ships, Patroclus convinced Achilles to let him don Achilles' armor and lead the Myrmidons into combat. In his lust for combat, Patroclus pursued the Trojans all the way back to the gates of Troy, defying Achilles' order to break off combat once the ships were saved. Patroclus killed many Trojans and allies including the Lycian hero Sarpedon (a son of Zeus), and Cebriones (the chariot driver of Hector and illegitimate son of Priam). Patroclus was stunned by Apollo, wounded by Euphorbos, then finished off by Hector. At the time of his death, Patroclus had killed 53 enemy

soldiers.^[1]

After retrieving his body, which had been protected on the field by Odysseus and Ajax (Telamonian Aias), Achilles returned to battle and avenged his companion's death by killing Hector. Achilles then desecrated Hector's body by dragging it behind his chariot instead of allowing the Trojans to honorably dispose of it by burning it. Achilles' grief was great and for some time, he refused to dispose of Patroclus' body; but he was persuaded to do so by an apparition of Patroclus, who told Achilles he could not enter Hades without a proper cremation. Achilles sheared off his hair, and sacrificed horses, dogs, and twelve Trojan captives before placing Patroclus' body on the funeral pyre.

Achilles then organized an athletic competition to honour his dead companion, which included a chariot race (won by Diomedes), boxing (won by Epeios), wrestling (a draw between Telamonian Aias and Odysseus), a foot race (won by Odysseus), a duel (a draw between Aias and Diomedes), a discus throw (won by Polypoites), an archery contest (won by Meriones), and a javelin throw (won by Agamemnon, unopposed). The games are described in Book 23 of the *Iliad*, one of the earliest references to Greek sports.

Relationship to Achilles

In the *Iliad*, the relationship between Patroclus and Achilles is a vital part of the story. The relationship contributes to the overall theme of the humanization of Achilles. While the *Iliad* never explicitly stated as such, in later Greek writings, such as Plato's *Symposium*, the relationship between Patroclus and Achilles is held up as a model of romantic love. However, Xenophon in his *Symposium*, argued that it was inaccurate to label their relationship as romantic. Nevertheless, their relationship is said to have inspired Alexander the Great in his supposed romantic relationship with his close friend Hephaestion.

Burial and later reports

The funeral of Patroclus is described in book 23 of the *Iliad*. Patroclus is cremated on a funeral pyre, and his bones are collected into a golden urn in two layers of fat. The barrow is built on the location of the pyre. Achilles then sponsors funeral games, consisting of a chariot race, boxing, wrestling, running, a duel between two champions to the first blood, discus throwing, archery and spear throwing.

The death of Achilles is given in sources other than the *Iliad*. His bones were mingled with those of Patroclus so that the two would be companions in death as in life and the remains were transferred to Leuke, an island in the Black Sea. Their souls were reportedly seen wandering the island at times.

In Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus meets Achilles in Hades, accompanied by Patroclus, Telamonian Aias and Antilochus.

A general of Croton identified either as Autoleon or Leonymus reportedly visited the island of Leuke while recovering from wounds received in battle against the Locri Epizefiri. The event was placed during or after the 7th century BCE. He reported having seen Patroclus in the company of Achilles, Ajax the Lesser, Telamonian Aias, Antilochus, and Helen.

Spoken-word myths - audio files

Achilles and Patroclus myths as told by story tellers

Bibliography of reconstruction: Homer *Iliad*, 9.308, 16.2, 11.780, 23.54 (700 BC); Pindar *Olympian Odes*, IX (476 BC); Aeschylus *Myrmidons*, F135-36 (495 BC); Euripides *Iphigenia in Aulis*, (405 BC); Plato *Symposium*, 179e (388 BC-367 BC); Statius *Achilleid*, 161, 174, 182 (96 CE)

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Hector

In Greek mythology, **Hectōr** (Ἑκτωρ), or **Hektōr**, was a Trojan prince and the greatest fighter for Troy in the Trojan War. As the first-born son of King Priam and Queen Hecuba, a descendant of Dardanus, who lived under Mount Ida, and of Tros, the founder of Troy,^[1] he was a prince of the royal house and the heir apparent to his father's throne. He was married to Andromache, with whom he had an infant son, Scamandrius (whom the people of Troy called Astyanax). He acts as leader of the Trojans and their allies in the defense of Troy, killing 31 Greek fighters in all.^[2] In the European Middle Ages, Hector figures as one of the Nine Worthies noted by Jacques de Longuyon, known not only for his courage but also for his noble and courtly nature. Indeed Homer places Hector as peace-loving, thoughtful as well as bold, a good son, husband and father, and without darker motives. When the Trojans are disputing whether the omens are favorable, he retorts: "One omen is best: defending the fatherland."



Hector brought back to Troy. From a Roman sarcophagus of ca. 180–200 AD.

Etymology

In Greek, *Héktōr* is a derivative of the verb *ékhein*, archaic form *hékhein*, "to have" or "to hold". *Héktōr*, or *Éktōr* as found in Aeolic poetry, is also an epithet of Zeus in his capacity as "he who holds [everything together]". Hector's name could thus be taken to mean "holding fast".^[3]

Greek mythology

Greatest warrior of Troy

According to the *Iliad*, Hector did not approve of war between the Greeks and the Trojans.

For ten years the Achaeans besieged Troy and their allies in the east. Hector commanded the Trojan army, with a number of subordinates including Polydamas, and his brothers Deiphobus, Helenus and Paris. However, by all accounts Hector was the best warrior the Trojans and all their allies could field, and his fighting prowess was admired by Greeks and his own people alike.

Diomedes and Odysseus, when faced with his attack, described him as what Robert Fagles translated as an 'invincible headlong terror', and a 'maniac'.

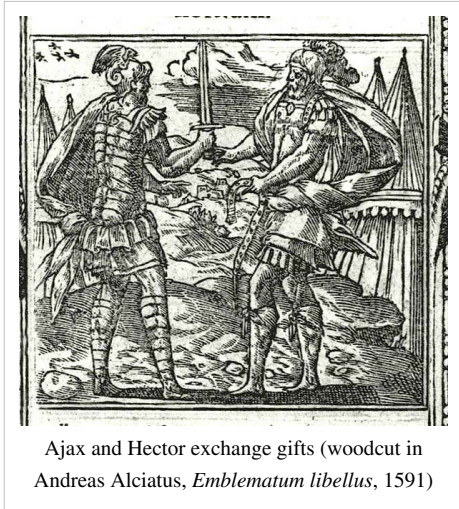
Duels with warriors



Hector Admonishes Paris for His Softness and Exhorts Him to Go to War by J.H.W. Tischbein (1751–1828)

Duel with Protesilaus

In the *Iliad*, Hector's exploits in the war prior to the events of the book are recapitulated. He had fought the Greek champion Protesilaus in single combat at the start of the war and killed him. A prophecy had stated that the first Greek to land on Trojan soil would die. Protesilaus, Ajax and Odysseus thus would not land. Finally, Odysseus threw his shield out and landed on that, and Protesilaus jumped next from his own ship. In the ensuing fight, Hector killed him, fulfilling the prophecy.



Duel with Ajax

At the advice of his brother Helenus (who also is divinely inspired) and being told by him that he is not destined to die yet, Hector manages to get both armies seated and challenges any one of the Greek warriors to single combat.^[4] The Argives are initially reluctant to accept the challenge. However, after Nestor's chiding, nine Greek heroes step up to the challenge and draw by lot to see who is to face Hector. Ajax wins, and fights Hector to a stalemate for the entire day. With neither able to achieve victory, they express admiration for each other's courage, skill, and strength. Hector gives Ajax his sword, which Ajax will later use to kill himself. Ajax gives Hector his girdle, which will later be used to attach Hector's corpse to Achilles' chariot by which he is dragged around the walls of Troy.

The Greek and the Trojans make a truce to bury the dead. In the early dawn the next day the Greeks take advantage of it to build a wall and ditch around the ships. Zeus is watching in a distance.^[5]

Duel with Achilles

Another mention of Hector's exploits in the early years of war was given in the *Iliad* book 9. During the embassy to Achilles, Odysseus, Phoenix and Ajax all try to persuade Achilles to rejoin the fight. In his response, Achilles points out that while Hector was terrorizing the Greek forces now, while he himself had fought in their front lines, Hector had 'no wish' to take his force far beyond the walls and out from the Scaean Gate and nearby oak tree. He then claims, 'There he stood up to me alone one day, and he barely escaped my onslaught.'

A 2004 film version of *Troy* has Achilles slaying Hector following a duel, whereas in the *Iliad* it is rather different. Hector remains outside the walls, while his army flees into the city. As Achilles approaches, Hector stands his ground, fights and dies upon looking up at Troy. The film version of his death more resembles the single combat between the champions mentioned by Achilles in the *Iliad*, book 9.

In the tenth year of the war, observing Paris avoiding combat with Menelaus, Hector upbraids him with having brought trouble on his whole country and now refusing to fight. Paris therefore proposes single combat between himself and Menelaus, with Helen to go to the victor, ending the war.^[6] The duel, however, leads to inconclusive results due to intervention by Aphrodite who leads Paris off the field. After Pandarus wounds Menelaus with an arrow the fight begins again.

The Greeks attack and drive the Trojans back. Hector must now go out to lead a counter-attack. His wife, Andromache, carrying in her arms their son Astyanax, intercepts him at the gate, pleading with him not to go out for her sake as well as his son's. Hector knows that Troy and the house of Priam are doomed to fall and that the gloomy fate of his wife and infant son will be to die or go into slavery in a foreign land. With understanding, compassion, and tenderness he explains that he cannot personally refuse to fight, and comforts her with the idea that no one can take him until it is his time to go.^[7] The gleaming bronze helmet frightens Astyanax and makes him cry.^[8] Hector takes it off, embraces his wife and son, and for her sake prays aloud to Zeus that his son might be chief after him and become more glorious in battle than he.



Hector's last visit with his wife, Andromache, and infant son Astyanax, startled by his father's helmet (Apulian red-figure vase, 370–360 BC)

Hector and Paris pass through the gate and rally the Trojans, raising havoc among the Greeks.

Trojan counterattack

Zeus weighs the fates of the two armies in the balance, and that of the Greeks sinks down. The Trojans press the Greeks into their camp over the ditch and wall and would have laid hands on the ships, but Agamemnon rallies the Greeks in person. The Trojans are driven off, night falls, and Hector resolves to take the camp and burn the ships next day. The Trojans bivouac in the field.

"A thousand camp-fires gleamed upon the plain, ...".^[9]

The next day Agamemnon rallies the Greeks and drives the Trojans

"like a herd of cows maddened with fright when a lion has attacked them ...".^[10]

Hector refrains from battle until Agamemnon leaves the field, wounded in the arm by a spear. Then Hector rallies the Trojans:

"...like some fierce tempest that swoops down upon the sea...."

Diomedes and Odysseus hinder Hector and win the Greeks some time to retreat, but the Trojans sweep down upon the wall and rain blows upon it. The Greeks in the camp contest the gates to secure entrance for their fleeing warriors. The Trojans try to pull down the ramparts while the Greeks rain arrows upon them. Hector smashes open a gate with a large stone, clears the gate and calls on the Trojans to scale the wall, which they do, and

"... all was uproar and confusion."^[11]

The battle rages inside the camp. Hector goes down, hit by a stone thrown by Ajax, but Apollo arrives from Olympus and infuses strength into "the shepherd of the people", who orders a chariot attack, with Apollo clearing the way. Many combats, deaths, boasts, threats, epithets, figures of speech, stories, lines of poetry and books of the Iliad later, Hector lays hold of Protesilaus' ship and calls for fire. The Trojans cannot bring it to him, as Ajax kills everyone who tries. Eventually, Hector breaks Ajax' spear with his sword, forcing him to give ground, and he sets the ship on fire.^[12]



Battle at the ships, on a Roman-era sarcophagus, 225-250 AD.

These events are all according to the will of the gods, who have decreed the fall of Troy, and therefore intend to tempt Achilles back into the war. Patroclus, Achilles' closest companion, disguised in the armor of Achilles, enters the combat leading the Myrmidons and the rest of the Achaeans to force a Trojan withdrawal. After Patroclus has routed the Trojan army, Hector, with the aid of Apollo and Euphorbus, kills Patroclus, vaunting over him:

"I am foremost of all the Trojan warriors to stave the day of bondage from off them; as for you, vultures shall devour you here."

The dying Patroclus replies:

".. death and the day of your doom are close upon you..."^[13]

Hector's last fight

"Alas! the gods have lured me on to my destruction. ... death is now indeed exceedingly near at hand and there is no way out of it- for so Zeus and his son Apollo the far-darter have willed it, though heretofore they have been ever ready to protect me. My doom has come upon me; let me not then die ingloriously and without a struggle, but let me first do some great thing that shall be told among men hereafter."

—Spoken by Hector facing Achilles, after a missed spear-throw, The Iliad Book XXII Lines 299-305.

Hector strips the armor of Achilles off the fallen Patroclus and gives it to his men to take back to the city. Glaucus accuses Hector of cowardice for not challenging Ajax. Stung, Hector calls for the armor, puts it on and uses it to rally the Trojans. Zeus regards the donning of a hero's armor as an act of insolence by a fool about to die, but it makes him strong for now.^[14]

The next day, the enraged Achilles renounces the wrath that kept him out of action and routs the Trojans back to the city. Hector chooses to remain outside the gates of Troy and face Achilles, partially because had he listened to Polydamas and retreated with his troops the previous night, Achilles would not have killed so many Trojans. However, when he sees Achilles he is seized by fear, and turns to flee, as Achilles gives chase to him three times around the city. Hector then masters his fear and turns to face Achilles. But Athena, in the disguise of Hector's brother Deiphobus, deluded Hector. He requests from Achilles that the victor would return the other's body after the duel, (though Hector himself made it clear he planned to throw Patroclus' body to the dogs) but Achilles refuses. Achilles hurls his spear at Hector, who dodges it, but Athena brought it back to Achilles' hands without Hector noticing. Hector then throws his spear at Achilles; it hits the shield but to no avail. When Hector turns to face his supposed brother to retrieve another spear he sees no one there. At that moment he realizes that he is doomed. Hector decides that he will go down fighting and that men will talk about his bravery in years to come; the desire to achieve ever-lasting honor was one of the most fierce for soldiers living in the timocratic (honor based) society of the age.



Triumphant Achilles dragging Hector's lifeless body in front of the Gates of Troy. (From a panoramic fresco on the upper level of the main hall of the Achilleion)

Hector pulls out his sword, now his only weapon, and charges. Achilles, knowing the weak spot of his old armor, which Hector now wears, is at the neck, stabs his spear through the armor into Hector's throat but misses the vocal cords. Hector, in his final moments, begs Achilles for an honorable burial. However, Achilles replies that he will let dogs and vultures devour Hector's flesh. (Throughout the Homeric poems, several references are made to dogs, vultures, and other creatures that devour the dead. It can be seen as another way of saying one will die.) Hector dies,

prophesying that Achilles' death will follow soon.

After his death, Achilles slits Hector's heels and passes the girdle that Ajax had given Hector through the slits of the heels. He then fastens the girdle to his chariot and drives his fallen enemy through the dust to the Danaan camp. For the next twelve days, Achilles mistreats the body, but it remains preserved from all injury by Apollo and Aphrodite. After these twelve days, the gods can no longer stand watching it and send down two messengers: Iris, another messenger god, and Thetis, mother to Achilles. Thetis has told Achilles to allow King Priam to come and take the body for ransom. Once King Priam has been notified that Achilles will allow him to claim the body, he goes to his safe to withdraw the ransom for Hector's body. The ransom King Priam offers included twelve fine robes, twelve white mantles, several richly embroidered tunics, ten bars of yellow gold, a special gold cup, and several cauldrons. King Priam himself soon comes to claim the body, and Hermes grants him safe passage by casting a charm that will make anyone who looks at him fall asleep.

“	Think of thy father, and this helpless face behold! See him in me, as helpless and as old! Though not so wretched: there he yields to me, The first of men in sovereign misery! Thus forced to kneel, thus groveling to embrace The scourge and ruin of my realm and race; Suppliant my children's murderer to implore, And kiss those hands yet reeking with their gore!	”
—Spoken by Priam to Achilles, The Iliad Book XXIV, Pope's translation		

Achilles, moved by Priam's actions and following his mother's orders sent by Zeus, returns Hector's body, and promises Priam a truce of twelve days to allow the Trojans to perform funeral rites for Hector. Priam returns to Troy with the body of his son, and it is given full funeral honors. Even Helen mourns Hector, for he had always been kind to her and protected her from spite. The last lines of the *Iliad* are dedicated to Hector's funeral. Homer concludes by referring to the Trojan prince as the "tamer of horses."^[15]

Historical references

There is little direct evidence of the historical existence of Homeric heroes; i.e., no inscriptions, signatures, eye-witness accounts, etc. Theories about them have to rely on a preponderance of other evidence, which alone are not solid enough to warrant much conclusiveness. The most valuable evidence, if relevant, are the treaties and letters mentioned in Hittite cuneiform texts of the same approximate era, which mention an unruly Western Anatolian warlord named *Piyama-Radu* (possibly Priam) and his successor *Alaksandu* (possibly Alexander, the nickname of Paris) both based in *Wilusa* (possibly Ilion/Ilios), as well as the god *Apaliunas* (possibly Apollo).

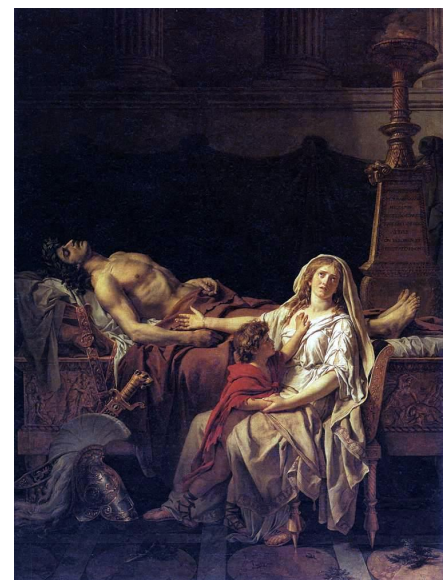
Other such pieces of quasi-evidence are names of Trojan heroes in Linear B tablets. Twenty out of fifty-eight men's names also known from Homer, including *e-ko-to* (Hector), are Trojan warriors and some, including Hector, are in a servile capacity.^[16] No such conclusion that they are the offspring of Trojan captive women is warranted. Generally the public has to be content with the knowledge that these names existed in Greek in Mycenaean times, although Page^[17] hypothesizes that Hector "may very well be ... a familiar Greek form impressed on a similar-sounding foreign name."

When Pausanias visited Thebes in Boeotia, in the second century AD, he was shown Hector's tomb and was told that the bones had been transported to Thebes according to a Delphic oracle. Moses I. Finley observes^[18] "this typical bit of fiction must mean that there was an old Theban hero Hector, a Greek, whose myths antedated the Homeric poems. Even after Homer had located Hector in Troy for all time, the Thebans held on to their hero, and the Delphic oracle provided the necessary sanction."

Later treatments

Literature

- In Dante Alighieri's *Inferno* (which is part of the Divine Comedy series), Hector and his family are placed in Limbo, the outer circle wherein the virtuous non-Christians dwell.
- Roland's sword in early 12th century French poem *Song of Roland*, was named Durendal. According to Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* it once belonged to Hector of Troy, and was given to Roland by Malagigi (Maugris).
- In William Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, Hector's death is used to mark the conclusion of the play. His nobility is shown in stark contrast to the deceit and pridefulness of the Greeks, especially Achilles.
- In David Gemmell's Troy trilogy Hektor is seen as a man of peace and would rather breed his horses than go to war but is forced by King Priam to fight for the Hittite empire against the Egyptians at the Battle of Kadesh and other conflicts. In *Fall of Kings* Hektor kills Patrokles while attacking a supply wagon. Achilles challenges Hektor to a duel through Odysseus. Hektor accepts but only so the women and children of Troy could get on ship's to Kypros. They fight in a specially designed pit dug especially for the duel. Hektor and Achilles are equally matched but both their swords are poisoned by Agamemnon's priest. Both warriors died fighting back to back against Agamemnon's followers. Achilles' Myrmidons carry Hektor back to Troy and Achilles back to their camp and the next morning head back to Thessaly.
- In Michael Longley's poem 'Ceasefire', Priam's petition to Achilles for the return of Hector's body is used as an analogue for the necessity for opposing sides to make conciliatory gestures, however difficult, to bring about peace in Northern Ireland. The poem ends with Priam's declaration, 'I get down on my knees and do what must be done/And kiss Achilles' hand, the killer of my son.'



The Grief and Recriminations of Andromache over the Body of Hector Her Husband (1783) by Jacques-Louis David

Film and television

Hector has been portrayed by a variety of actors in numerous films, including the following:

- Harry Andrews in *Helen of Troy* (1956)
- Jacques Bergerac in *The Fury of Achilles* (1962)
- Daniel Lapaine in *Helen of Troy* (2003)
- Eric Bana in *Troy* (2004)
- Hector is the name of the cyborg robot in the science fiction movie *Saturn 3* (1980); actor Kirk Douglas mentions the Greek myth of Hector after a violent encounter with the robot.
- Is mentioned in the movie *Gladiator* by Commodus who says, "Your fame is well deserved Spaniard. I don't think there's ever been a gladiator to match you. As for this young man (motioning to Lucius), he insists that you are Hector reborn...(now speaking to Lucius) or was it Hercules?"

Miscellaneous

- Hector is given his heraldry of a seated lion holding a sword in the *Enfances Hector* of the early 14th century.
- Hector is commemorated as the face of the Jack of diamonds in French playing cards.

References

- [1] *Iliad* XX.215ff.
- [2] Hyginus, *Fabulae* 115.
- [3] This etymology is given under Hector (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=hector&searchmode=none>) in the *Online Etymological Dictionary*, which, if true, would make it an Indo-European name, of root *seǵh- (<http://www.bartleby.com/61/roots/IE445.html>). The Dardanians would not have been Greek, but the language of the city of Troy is still an open question.
- [4] *Iliad*, VII.
- [5] *Iliad* VII.433ff)
- [6] *Iliad* III.
- [7] *Iliad* VI.
- [8] This Trojan helmet was made famous by Denys Page in *History and the Homeric Iliad*, Chapter VI, "Some Mycenaean relics in the Iliad", as the Greeks do not wear bronze helmets in the poem's epic formulae, but they did in the Homeric Age; therefore, Page concludes (on other evidence as well) that the bronze helmet of Hector descends in oral poetry from Mycenaean times.
- [9] *Iliad* VIII.542ff.
- [10] *Iliad*, XI.163ff.
- [11] *Iliad* XII.
- [12] *Iliad*, XV end.
- [13] *Iliad* XVI end.
- [14] *Iliad* XVII.
- [15] *Bibliotheca* III, xii, 5-6; *Epitome* IV, 2.
- [16] John Chadwick, in Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, 2nd edition, Cambridge, 1973, p. 104.
- [17] Page *History and the Homeric Iliad*, Chapter V.
- [18] Finley, *The World of Odysseus*, 1954, rev. ed. 1978) p. 44

External links

-  "Hector". *Encyclopedia Americana*. 1920.

Paris

Paris (Ancient Greek: Πάρις; also known as **Alexander** or **Alexandros**, c.f. *Alaksandu of Wilusa*), the son of Priam, king of Troy, appears in a number of Greek legends. Probably the best-known was his elopement with Helen, queen of Sparta, this being one of the immediate causes of the Trojan War. Later in the war, he fatally wounds Achilles in the heel with an arrow, as foretold by Achilles's mother, Thetis.

Paris's childhood

Paris was a child of Priam and Hecuba (see List of King Priam's children). Just before his birth, his mother dreamed that she gave birth to a flaming torch. This dream was interpreted by the seer Aesacus as a foretelling of the downfall of Troy, and he declared that the child would be the ruin of his homeland. On the day of Paris's birth it was further announced by Aesacus that the child born of a royal Trojan that day would have to be killed to spare the kingdom, being the child that would bring about the prophecy. Though Paris was indeed born before nightfall, he was spared by Priam; Hecuba, too, was unable to kill the child, despite the urging of the priestess of Apollo, one Herophile. Instead, Paris's father prevailed upon his chief herdsman, Agelaus, to remove the child and kill him. The herdsman, unable to use a weapon against the infant, left him exposed on Mount Ida, hoping he would perish there (cf: Oedipus); he was, however, suckled by a she-bear. Returning after nine days, Agelaus was astonished to find the child still alive, and brought him home in a backpack (πήρα, hence Paris's name, which means "backpack") to rear as his own. He returned to Priam bearing a dog's tongue as evidence of the deed's completion.^[1]

Paris's noble birth was betrayed by his outstanding beauty and intelligence; while still a child he routed a gang of cattle-thieves and restored the animals they had stolen to the herd, thereby earning the surname Alexander ("protector of men").^[2] It was at this time that Oenone became Paris's first lover. She was a nymph from Mount Ida in Phrygia. Her father was Cebren, a river-god (other sources declare her to be the daughter of Oeneus). She was skilled in the arts of prophecy and medicine, which she had been taught by Rhea and Apollo respectively. When Paris later left her for Helen she told him that if he ever was wounded, he should come to her for she could heal any injury, even the most serious wounds.

Paris's chief distraction at this time was to pit Agelaus's bulls against one another. One bull began to win these bouts consistently, and Paris began to set it against rival herdsman's own prize bulls; it defeated them all. Finally Paris offered a golden crown to any bull that could defeat his champion. Ares responded to this challenge by transforming himself into a bull and easily winning the contest. Paris gave the crown to Ares without hesitation; it was this apparent honesty in judgment that prompted the gods of Olympus to have Paris arbitrate the divine contest between Hera, Aphrodite, and Athena.



Prince Paris with apple by H.W. Bissen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen

The Judgment of Paris



El Juicio de Paris by Enrique Simonet, ca. 1904. Paris is studying Aphrodite, who is standing before him naked. The other two goddesses watch nearby.



Judgement of Paris, porcelain, Capitoline Museums, Rome

In celebration of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, Lord Zeus, father of the Greek pantheon, hosted a banquet on Mount Olympus. Every deity and demi-god had been invited, except Eris, the goddess of strife (no one wanted a troublemaker at a wedding). For revenge, Eris threw the golden Apple of Discord inscribed with the word "Kallisti" — "For the fairest" — into the party, provoking a squabble among the attendant goddesses over for whom it had been meant.

The goddesses thought to be the most beautiful were Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite, and each one claimed the apple. They started a quarrel so they asked Zeus to choose one of them. Knowing that choosing any of them would bring him the hatred of the other two, Zeus did not want to take part in the decision. He thus appointed Paris to select the most beautiful. Escorted by Hermes, the three goddesses bathed in the spring of Mount Ida and approached Paris as he herded his cattle. Paris, having been given permission by Zeus to set any conditions he saw fit, required that the goddesses disrobe and allow him to see them naked.^[3] (Another version of the myth says that the goddesses themselves chose to undress to show all their beauty.) Still, Paris could not decide, as all three were ideally beautiful, so the goddesses attempted to bribe him to choose among them - Hera offered ownership of all of Europe and Asia; Athena offered skill

in battle, wisdom and the abilities of the greatest warriors; and Aphrodite offered the love of the most beautiful woman on Earth, Helen of Sparta. Paris chose Aphrodite— and, therefore, Helen.

Helen was already married to King Menelaus of Sparta (a fact Aphrodite neglected to mention), so Paris had to raid Menelaus's house to steal Helen from him (according to some accounts, she fell in love with Paris and left willingly). The Greeks' expedition to retrieve Helen from Paris in Troy is the mythological basis of the Trojan War. This triggered the war because Helen was famous for her beauty throughout Achaea (ancient Greece), and had many suitors of extraordinary ability. Therefore, following Odysseus's advice, her father Tyndareus made all suitors promise to defend Helen's marriage to the man he chose for her. When she disappeared to Troy,

Menelaus invoked this oath. Helen's other suitors—who between them represented the lion's share of Achaea's strength, wealth and military prowess—were obligated to help bring her back. Thus, the whole of Greece moved against Troy in force. The Trojan War had begun.



This is a fresco of Paris abducting Helen by force. It is painted on a wall inside a villa in Venice, Italy.

Paris and the Trojan War

Homer's *Iliad* casts Paris as unskilled and cowardly. His brother Hector scolds and belittles him,^[4] though Paris readily admits his shortcomings in battle. His preference for bow and arrow emphasizes this, since he does not follow the code of honor shared by the other heroes. After slaying Hector and other heroes, Achilles dies by an arrow. By some accounts, the archer is Paris with Apollo's help; by others it is Apollo disguised as Paris.

Early in the epic, Paris and Menelaus duel in an attempt to end the war without further bloodshed. Menelaus easily defeats Paris, though Aphrodite spirits him away before Menelaus can finish the duel. Paris is returned to his bedchambers where Aphrodite forces Helen to be with him.^[5]

Paris's second attempt at combat is equally faced: rather than engage the Greek hero Diomedes in melee combat, Paris wounds Diomedes with an arrow through the foot.

Later in the war, after Philoctetes mortally wounds Paris, Helen makes her way to Mount Ida where she begs Paris's first wife, the nymph Oenone, to heal him. Still bitter that Paris had spurned her for his birthright in the city and then forgotten her for Helen, Oenone refuses. Helen returns alone to Troy, where Paris dies later the same day. In



Statue of Paris in the British Museum

another version, Paris himself, in great pain, visits Oenone to plead for healing but is refused and dies on the mountainside. When Oenone hears of his funeral, she runs to his funeral pyre and throws herself in its fire.^[6]

After Paris's death, his brother Deiphobus married Helen and was then murdered by Menelaus in the sack of Troy.

Later treatments

- Jacques Offenbach, Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy's 1864 operetta *La Belle Hélène* tells a droll version of the seduction of Helen by Paris, who is the lead male role.
- In the 1956 film *Helen of Troy*, Paris, as the main character, is portrayed as a heroic character who at first worships peace and love but is later forced to take up arms against the treacherous Greeks.
- In the 1961 film *Trojan Horse*, Paris is played by Warner Bentivegna.
- In the 1962 film *The Fury of Achilles*, Paris is played by Roberto Risso.
- The Judgment of Paris and its aftermath are the subject of Michael Tippett's 1962 opera *King Priam*.
- In the 2003 TV miniseries *Helen of Troy*, the character Paris, played by actor Matthew Marsden, is killed by Agamemnon.
- In the 2004 Hollywood film *Troy*, the character Paris was played by actor Orlando Bloom. He is not killed by Philoctetes in this version, but leaves the falling city of Troy together with Helen and survives. Paris is portrayed as an irresponsible prince who put his romance before his family and country.
- In prose he appears as the main character in Rudolf Hagelstange's book *Spielball der Götter* (Game of Gods).
- The song "The Third Temptation of Paris" by Alesana tells the story of Helen and Paris from the viewpoint of Paris.
- The story was also made into a musical, *Paris Prince of Troy*, written by Jon English and David Mackay. Barry Humphries starred in the original performance as Sinon.
- The song, *Crimes of Paris* by Elvis Costello on his album *Blood and Chocolate* asks the question, "Who'll pay for the Crimes of Paris, who's gonna pay for the Crimes of Paris?"
- In Aaron Allston's *Galatea in 2-D*, a painting of Paris, brought to life, is used against a painting of Achilles brought to life.

Notes and references

- [1] For a comparison of hero births, including Sargon, Moses, Karna, Oedipus, Paris, Telephus, Perseus, Romulus, Gilgamesh, Cyrus, Jesus, and others, see: Rank, Otto. *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*. Vintage Books: New York, 1932.
- [2] <http://www.ancientlibrary.com/seiffert/0461.html>
- [3] Neil Phillip. *Myths and Legends*. Dorling Kindersley.
- [4] e.g., *Iliad*, bk. 3, lines 38-57.
- [5] *Iliad*, bk. 3, lines 340-419.
- [6] Way, A.S. (Ed. & Trans.): "Quintus Smyrnaeus: The Fall of Troy" bk. 10, 259-489 (Loeb Classics #19; Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1913). <http://www.theoi.com/Nymphe/NympheOinone.html>

External links

- 'The Judgement of Paris' by William Etty (<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/picture-of-month/displaypicture.asp?venue=7&id=136>) at the Lady Lever Art Gallery (<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ladylever/index.asp>)

Menelaus

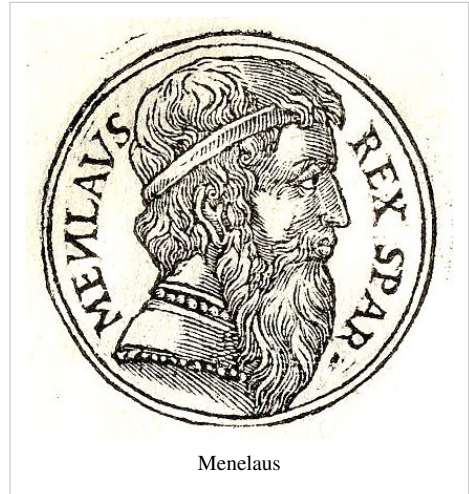
In Greek mythology, **Menelaus** (Ancient Greek: Μενέλαος, *Menelaos*) was a legendary king of Mycenaean (pre-Dorian) Sparta, the husband of Helen of Troy, and a central figure in the Trojan War. He was the son of Atreus and Aerope, and brother of Agamemnon king of Mycenae and, according to the *Iliad*, leader of the Spartan contingent of the Greek army during the War. Prominent in both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Menelaus was also popular in Greek vase painting and Greek tragedy; the latter more as a hero of the Trojan War than as a member of the doomed House of Atreus.

Ascension and reign

Although early authors such as Aeschylus refer in passing to Menelaus' early life, detailed sources are quite late, post-dating 5th-century BC Greek tragedy.^[1] According to these sources, Menelaus' father Atreus had been feuding with his brother Thyestes over the throne of Mycenae. After a back-and-forth struggle that featured adultery, incest and cannibalism, Thyestes gained the throne after his son Aegisthus murdered Atreus. As a result, Atreus' sons, Menelaus and Agamemnon, went into exile. They first stayed with King Polyphides of Sicyon, and later with King Oeneus of Calydon. But when they thought the time was ripe to dethrone Mycenae's hostile ruler, they returned. Assisted by King Tyndareus of Sparta, they drove Thyestes away, and Agamemnon took the throne for himself.

When it was time for Tyndareus' step-daughter Helen to marry, many Greek kings and princes came to seek her hand, or sent emissaries to do so on their behalf. Among the contenders were Odysseus, Menestheus, Ajax the Great, Patroclus, and Idomeneus. Most offered opulent gifts to win Tyndareus' favor. But Tyndareus would accept none of the gifts, nor would he send any of the suitors away for fear of offending them and giving grounds for a quarrel. Odysseus promised to solve the problem in a satisfactory manner if Tyndareus would support him in his courting of Tyndareus' niece Penelope, the daughter of Icarius. Tyndareus readily agreed, and Odysseus proposed that, before the decision was made, all the suitors should swear a most solemn oath to defend the chosen husband in any quarrel. Then it was decreed that straws were to be drawn for Helen's hand. The suitor who won was Menelaus (Tyndareus, not to displease the powerful Agamemnon offered him another daughter Clytemnestra).^[2] The rest of the Greek kings swore their oaths, and Helen and Menelaus were married, Menelaus becoming a ruler of Sparta with Helen after Tyndareus and Leda either died or abdicated the thrones. Menelaus and Helen had a daughter, Hermione as supported, for example, by Sappho^[3] and some variations of the myth suggest they had two sons as well.

Their palace (ἀνάκτορον) has been discovered (the excavations started in 1926 and continued until 1995) in Pellana, Laconia, to the north-west of modern (and classical) Sparta.^[4] Other archaeologists consider that Pellana is too far away from other Mycenaean centres to have been the "capital of Menelaus."^[5]



Menelaus

Trojan War



Menelaus regains Helen, detail of an Attic red-figure crater, ca. 450–440 BC, found in Gnathia (now Egnazia, Italy).

In a return for awarding her a golden apple inscribed "to the fairest," Aphrodite promised Paris the most beautiful woman in all the world.^[6] After concluding a diplomatic mission to Sparta during the latter part of which Menelaus was absent to attend the funeral of his maternal grandfather Catreus,^[7] Paris absconded to Troy with Helen in tow despite his brother Hector forbidding her to depart with them. Invoking the oath of Tyndareus, Menelaus and Agamemnon raised a fleet of one thousand ships according to legend and went to Troy to secure Helen's return; the Trojans were recalcitrant, providing a *casus belli* for the Trojan War. Indeed, his name is interpreted in Greek as "Μῆνις Λαοῦ" (Wrath of the People) fitting his 'historing' role in the epics or "Μένοϛ Λαοῦ" (Force/Impetus of the People).^[8]

Homer's *Iliad* is the most expansive source for Menelaus' exploits during the Trojan War. In Book 3, Menelaus challenges Paris to a duel for Helen's return. Menelaus soundly beats Paris, but before he can kill him and claim victory Aphrodite spirits Paris away inside the walls of Troy. In Book 4, while the Greeks and Trojans squabble over the duel's winner, Athena inspires the Trojan Pandarus to kill Menelaus with his bow and arrow. Menelaus is wounded in the abdomen, and the fighting resumes. Later, in Book 17, Homer gives Menelaus an extended *aristeia* as the hero retrieves the corpse of Patroclus from the battlefield.

According to Hyginus, Menelaus killed eight men in the war, and was one of the Greeks hidden inside the Trojan Horse. During the sack of Troy, Menelaus killed Deiphobus, who had married Helen after the death of Paris.

There are three versions of Menelaus' and Helen's reunion on the night of the sack of Troy: a) Menelaus resolved to kill Helen but Euripides tells us that, when he found her, her striking beauty prompted him to drop his sword and take her back to his ship "to punish her at Sparta", as he claimed, but in reality she got away with it.^[9] b) According to the *Bibliotheca* Epitome and Proclus in "Ilion's Conquest", Menelaus raised his sword in front of the temple of Minerva in the central square of Troy to kill her but his wrath went away when he saw her tearing her clothes to reveal her breasts. c) A similar version by Stesichorus in "Ilion's Conquest" narrated that Menelaus surrendered her indeed to his soldiers to stone her to death; however, when she ripped the front of her robes, the Achaean warriors got stunned by her beauty and the stones fell harmlessly from their hands.

After the war

Book 4 of the *Odyssey* provides an account of Menelaus' return from Troy and his homelife in Sparta. When visited by Odysseus' son Telemachus, Menelaus recounts his voyage home. As happened to many Greeks, Menelaus' ship was blown off course. While stranded in Egypt, Menelaus learned from Proteus how he could return home. After their homecoming, Menelaus and Helen's marriage is strained; Menelaus continually revisits the human cost of the Trojan War, particularly in light of the fact that Helen could not provide him a male heir. According to Euripides' *Helen*, after Menelaus dies, he is reunited with Helen on the Isle of the Blessed.^[10]

Menelaus in vase painting

Menelaus appears in Greek vase painting in the 6th to 4th centuries BC, such as: Menelaus' reception of Paris at Sparta; his retrieval of Patroclus' corpse; and his reunion with Helen.^[11]

Menelaus in Greek tragedy

Menelaus appears as a character in a number of 5th-century Greek tragedies: Sophocles' *Ajax*, and Euripides' *Andromache*, *Helen*, *Orestes*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, and *The Trojan Women*.

Menelaus in other media

- Menelaus is portrayed by Niall MacGinnis in the 1956 film *Helen of Troy*.
- Patrick Magee portrayed Menelaus in the 1971 film of *The Trojan Women*.
- In the Coen Brothers' *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, which is loosely based on Homer's *Odyssey*, Academy Award nominated actor Charles Durning plays Governor Menelaus 'Pappy' O'Daniel.
- In James Callis's revisionist 2003 miniseries *Helen of Troy*, Menelaus is encouraged to fight the Trojan War by his brother Agamemnon instead of by Helen's infidelity or the resulting slight to his honor.
- Menelaus also appears in the 2004 film *Troy*, portrayed by Brendan Gleeson. Like the 1957 film that influenced it, Menelaus is portrayed as a brutish king out for revenge. He duels Paris and wins, but Paris retreats to his brother, Hector. When Menelaus wants to strike the finishing blow, Hector kills him to protect his brother.
- Menelaus is a character in John Barth's short story, "Menelaiad" which is part of *Lost in the Funhouse*.

Notes

[1] Our chief sources for Menelaus' life before the Trojan War are Hyginus' *Fabulae* and the Epitome of the *Bibliotheca*.

[2] <http://mythologia.8m.com/trojanwar1.html>

[3] Sappho, fr. 16. See an analysis of the poem by Gumpert, Grafting Helen, 92

[4] <http://www.asxetos.gr/Default.aspx?tabId=155&c=28&aid=310#axzz1ZuDazyfn>

[5] Mee & Spawforth (2001), σ. 229

[6] See the Judgment of Paris.

[7] <http://mythologia.8m.com/trojanwar1.html>

[8] <http://www.votegreece.gr/archives/5147>

[9] *Andromache* 629-31.

[10] Line 1675.

[11] Woodford 1993.

Agamemnon

In Greek mythology, **Agamemnon** (English pronunciation: /æɡəˈmɛmɒn/; Ancient Greek: Ἀγαμέμνων; modern Greek: Αγαμέμνονας, "very steadfast") was the son of King Atreus and Queen Aerope of Mycenae, the brother of Menelaus, the husband of Clytemnestra, and the father of Electra and Orestes. Mythical legends make him the king of Mycenae or Argos, thought to be different names for the same area. When Helen, the wife of Menelaus, was abducted by Paris of Troy, Agamemnon commanded the united Greek armed forces in the ensuing Trojan War.

On Agamemnon's return from Troy he was murdered (according to the fullest version of the oldest surviving account, *Odyssey* 11.409–11) by Aegisthus, the lover of his wife Clytemnestra. In old versions of the story: "The scene of the murder, when it is specified, is usually the house of Aegisthus, who has not taken up residence in Agamemnon's palace, and it involves an ambush and the deaths of Agamemnon's followers too".^[1] In some later versions Clytemnestra herself does the killing, or they do it together, in his own home.



The "Mask of Agamemnon" which was discovered by Heinrich Schliemann in 1876 at Mycenae (whether it represents an individual, and if so, whom, remains unknown)

Historical prototype

Hittite sources mention ^{URU}*Akagamunaš*, ruler of ^{URU}*Ahhiyawa* (land of Achaeans) in the 14th century BC.^{[2][3]} This is a possible prototype of the Agamemnon of mythology.

Early life

Atreus, Agamemnon's father, murdered the children of his twin brother Thyestes and fed them to him after discovering Thyestes' adultery with his wife Aerope. Thyestes fathered Aegisthus with his own daughter, Pelopia, and this son vowed gruesome revenge on Atreus' children. Aegisthus successfully murdered Atreus and restored his father to the throne. Aegisthus took possession of the throne of Mycenae and ruled jointly with Thyestes. During this period Agamemnon and his brother, Menelaus, took refuge with Tyndareus, King of Sparta. There they respectively married Tyndareus' daughters Clytemnestra and Helen. Agamemnon and Clytemnestra had four children: one son, Orestes, and three daughters, Iphigenia, Electra and Chrysothemis. Menelaus succeeded Tyndareus in Sparta, while Agamemnon, with his brother's assistance, drove out Aegisthus and Thyestes to recover his father's kingdom. He extended his dominion by conquest and became the most powerful prince in Greece.

Agamemnon's family history had been marred by rape, murder, incest, and treachery, consequences of the heinous crime perpetrated by his ancestor, Tantalus, and then of a curse placed upon Pelops, son of Tantalus, by Myrtilus, whom he had murdered. Thus misfortune hounded successive generations of the House of Atreus, until atoned by Orestes in a court of justice held jointly by humans and gods.

Trojan War

Agamemnon gathered the reluctant Greek forces to sail for Troy. Preparing to depart from Aulis, which was a port in Boeotia, Agamemnon's army incurred the wrath of the goddess Artemis. There are several reasons throughout myth for such wrath: in Aeschylus' play *Agamemnon*, Artemis is angry for the young men who will die at Troy, whereas in Sophocles' *Electra*, Agamemnon has slain an animal sacred to Artemis, and subsequently boasted that he was Artemis' equal in hunting. Misfortunes, including a plague and a lack of wind, prevented the army from sailing. Finally, the prophet Calchas announced that the wrath of the goddess could only be propitiated by the sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter Iphigenia. Classical dramatisations differ on how willing either father or daughter were to this fate, some include such trickery as claiming she was to be married to Achilles, but Agamemnon did eventually sacrifice Iphigenia. Her death appeased Artemis, and the Greek army set out for Troy. Several alternatives to the human sacrifice have been presented in Greek mythology. Other sources, such as *Iphigenia at Aulis*, claim that Agamemnon was prepared to kill his daughter, but that Artemis accepted a deer in her place, and whisked her away to Taurus in Crimea. Hesiod said she became the goddess Hecate.

Agamemnon was the commander-in-chief of the Greeks during the Trojan War. During the fighting, Agamemnon killed Antiphus and 15 other Trojan soldiers.^[4] Agamemnon's teamster, Halaesus, later fought with Aeneas in Italy. The *Iliad* tells the story of the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles in the final year of the war. Agamemnon took an attractive slave, Briseis, one of the spoils of war, from Achilles. Achilles, the greatest warrior of the age, withdrew from battle in revenge and nearly cost the Greek armies the war.

Although not the equal of Achilles in bravery, Agamemnon was a representative of kingly authority. As commander-in-chief, he summoned the princes to the council and led the army in battle. He took the field himself, and performed many heroic deeds until he was wounded and forced to withdraw to his tent. His chief fault was his overwhelming haughtiness; an over-exalted opinion of his position that led him to insult Chryses and Achilles, thereby bringing great disaster upon the Greeks.

After the capture of Troy, Cassandra, doomed prophetess and daughter of Priam, fell to Agamemnon's lot in the distribution of the prizes of war.

Return to Greece

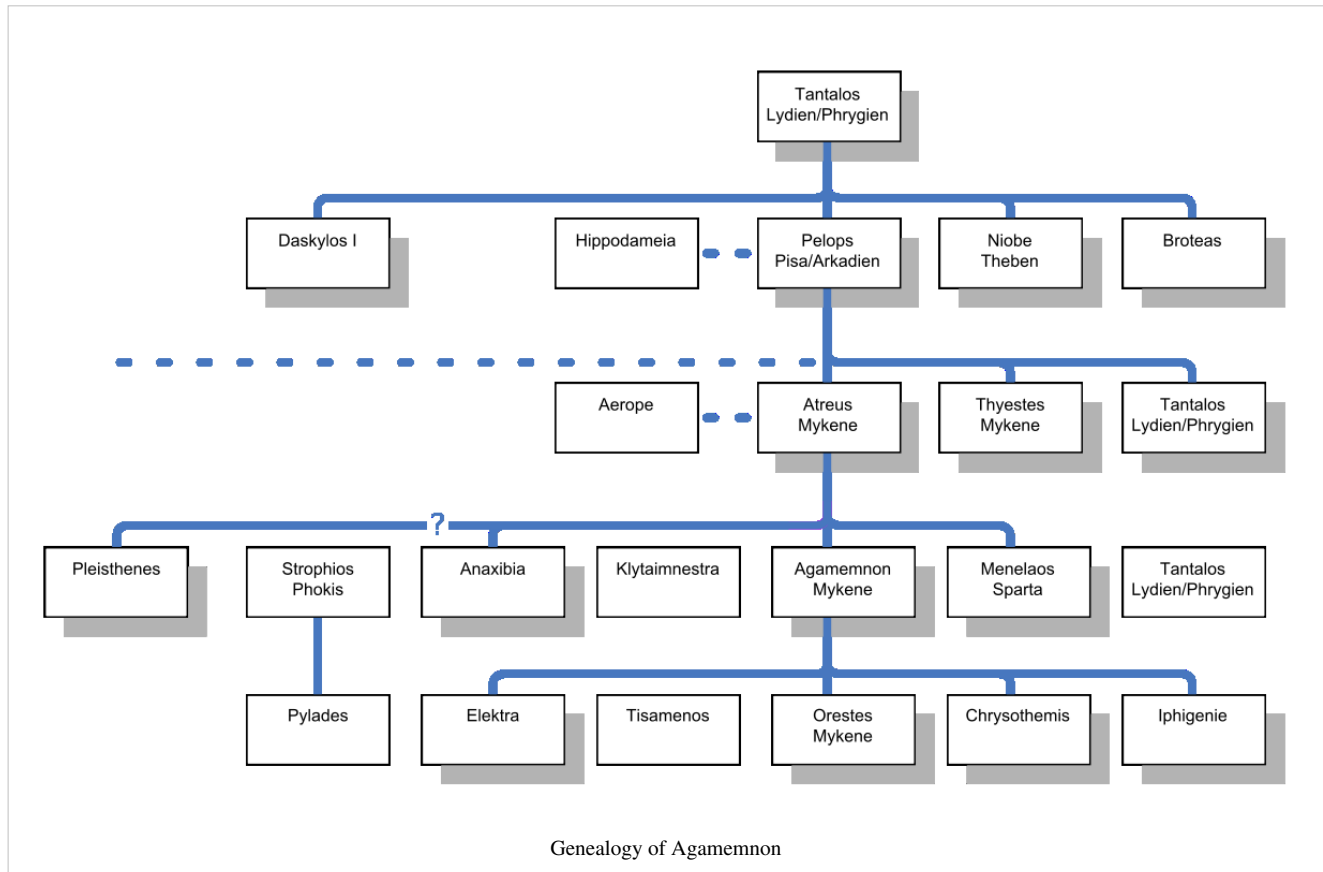


Orestes slaying Aegisthus

After a stormy voyage, Agamemnon and Cassandra either landed in Argolis, or were blown off course and landed in Aegisthus' country. Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife, had taken Aegisthus, son of Thyestes, as a lover. When Agamemnon came home he was slain by either Aegisthus (in the oldest versions of the story) or Clytemnestra. According to the accounts given by Pindar and the tragedians, Agamemnon was slain in a bath by his wife alone, a blanket of cloth or a net having first been thrown over him to prevent resistance. Clytemnestra also killed Cassandra. Her jealousy of Cassandra, and her wrath at the sacrifice of Iphigenia and at Agamemnon's having gone to war over Helen of Troy, are said to have been the motives for her crime. Aegisthus and Clytemnestra then ruled Agamemnon's kingdom for a time, Aegisthus claiming his right of revenge for Agamemnon's father Atreus having fed Thyestes his own children (Thyestes

then crying out "So perish all the race of Pleisthenes!",^[5] thus explaining Aegisthus' action as justified by his father's curse). Agamemnon's son Orestes later avenged his father's murder, with the help or encouragement of his sister Elektra, by murdering Aegisthus and Clytemnestra (his own mother), thereby inciting the wrath of the Erinyes (English: the Furies), winged goddesses who tracked down egregiously impious wrongdoers with their hounds' noses and drove them to insanity.

Genealogy



Other stories

Athenaeus tells a story of how Agamemnon mourned the loss of his friend Argynnus, when he drowned in the Cephissus river.^[6] He buried him, honored with a tomb and a shrine to Aphrodite Argynnis.^[7] This episode is also found in Clement of Alexandria,^[8] in Stephen of Byzantium (*Kopai* and *Argunnos*), and in Propertius, III with minor variations.^[9]

The fortunes of Agamemnon have formed the subject of numerous tragedies, ancient and modern, the most famous being the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus. In the legends of the Peloponnesus, Agamemnon was regarded as the highest type of a powerful monarch, and in Sparta he was worshipped under the title of *Zeus Agamemnon*. His tomb was pointed out among the ruins of Mycenae and at Amyclae.

Another account makes him the son of Pleisthenes (the son or father of Atreus), who is said to have been Aerope's first husband.

In works of art there is considerable resemblance between the representations of Zeus, king of the gods, and Agamemnon, king of men. He is generally depicted with a sceptre and diadem, conventional attributes of kings.

Agamemnon's mare was named Aetha. She was also one of two horses driven by Menelaus at the funeral games of Patroclus.^{[10][11]}

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Ajax

"Aias" redirects here. For other uses of this name, see AIAS (disambiguation) and Ajax (disambiguation).

Ajax or **Aias** (/ˈeɪdʒæks/ or /ˈɑːɪ.əs/; Ancient Greek: Αἴας, gen. Αἴαντος) was a mythological Greek hero, the son of Telamon and Periboea, and king of Salamis.^[1] He plays an important role in Homer's *Iliad* and in the Epic Cycle, a series of epic poems about the Trojan War. To distinguish him from Ajax, son of Oileus (Ajax the Lesser), he is called "**Telamonian Ajax**," "**Greater Ajax**," or "**Ajax the Great**". In Etruscan mythology, he is known as **Aivas Tlamunus**.

Family

Ajax is the son of Telamon, who was the son of Aeacus and grandson of Zeus, and his first wife Periboea. He is the cousin of Achilles, the most remembered Greek warrior, and is the elder half-brother of Teucer. Many illustrious Athenians, including Cimon, Miltiades, Alcibiades and the historian Thucydides, traced their descent from Ajax. The Italian scholar Maggiani recently showed that on an Etruscan tomb dedicated to Racvi Satlnei in Bologna (5th century BC) there is a writing that says: "aivastelmunsl = family of Ajax Télamon".

Description

In Homer's *Iliad* he is described as of great stature, colossal frame and strongest of all the Achaeans. Known as the 'bulwark of the Mycenaeans', he was trained by the centaur Chiron (who had trained his father, Telamon, and Achilles' father Peleus), at the same time as Achilles. He was described as vicious, fearless, strong and powerful but also with a very high level of combat intelligence.

After Achilles, Ajax is the most valuable warrior in Agamemnon's army (along with Diomedes), though he is not as cunning as Nestor, Diomedes, Idomeneus, or Odysseus, he is much more powerful and just as intelligent. He commands his army wielding a huge shield made of seven cow-hides with a layer of bronze. Most notably, Ajax is not wounded in any of the battles described in the *Iliad*, and he is the only principal character on either side who does not receive personal assistance from any of the gods who take part in the battles.

Trojan War

In the *Iliad*, Ajax is notable for his abundant strength and courage, seen particularly in two fights with Hector. In Book 7, Ajax is chosen by lot to meet Hector in a duel which lasts most of a whole day. Ajax at first gets the better of the encounter, wounding Hector with his spear and knocking him down with a large stone, but Hector fights on until the heralds, acting at the direction of Zeus, call a draw: the action ends without a winner and with the two combatants exchanging gifts, Ajax giving Hector a purple sash and Hector giving Ajax a sharp sword.

The second fight between Ajax and Hector occurs when the latter breaks into the Mycenaean camp, and fights with the Greeks among the ships. In Book 14, Ajax throws a giant rock at Hector which almost kills him. In Book 15, Hector is restored to his strength by Apollo and returns to attack the ships. Ajax, wielding an enormous spear as a weapon and leaping from ship to ship, holds off the Trojan armies virtually single-handedly. In Book 16, Hector and Ajax duel once again. Hector is set on burning the ships, the only way he feels the Greeks will truly be defeated. Hector is able to disarm Ajax (although Ajax is not hurt) and Ajax is forced to retreat, seeing that Zeus is clearly



Achilles and Ajax play a board game with knucklebones on this late 6th-century lekythos, a type of oil-storing vessel associated with funeral rites

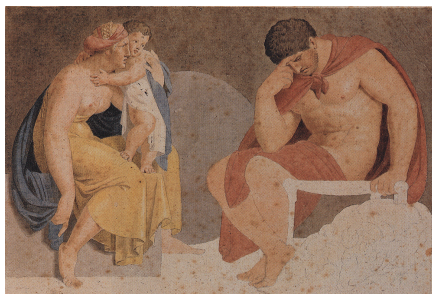
favoring Hector. Hector and the Trojans succeed in burning one Greek ship, the culmination of an assault that almost finishes the war. Ajax is responsible for the death of many Trojans lords, including Phorcys.

Ajax often fought in tandem with his brother Teucer, known for his skill with the bow. Ajax would wield his magnificent shield, as Teucer stood behind picking off enemy Trojans.

Achilles was absent during these encounters because of his feud with Agamemnon. In Book 9, Agamemnon and the other Mycenaean chiefs send Ajax, Odysseus and Phoenix to the tent of Achilles in an attempt to reconcile with the great warrior and induce him to return to the fight. Although Ajax speaks earnestly and is well received, he does not succeed in convincing Achilles.

When Patroclus is killed, Hector tries to steal his body. Ajax, assisted by Menelaus, succeeds in fighting off the Trojans and taking the body back with his chariot; however, the Trojans had already stripped Patroclus of Achilles' armor. Ajax's prayer to Zeus to remove the fog that has descended on the battle to allow them to fight or die in the light of day has become proverbial. According to Hyginus, in total, Ajax killed 28 people at Troy.^[2]

Death



Sorrowful Ajax (Asmus Jacob Carstens, ca. 1791)

Like most of the other Greek leaders, Ajax is alive and well as the *Iliad* comes to a close. Later, when Achilles dies, killed by Paris (with help from Apollo), Ajax and Odysseus are the heroes who fight against the Trojans to get the body and bury it next to his friend, Patroclus. Ajax, with his great shield and spear, manages to drive off the Trojans, while Odysseus pulls the body to his chariot, and rides away with it to safety. After the burial, both claim the armor for themselves, as recognition for their efforts. After several days of competition, Odysseus and Ajax are tied for the ownership of the magical armor which was forged on Mount Olympus by the god Hephaestus. It is then that a competition is

held to determine who deserves the armor. Ajax argues that because of his strength and the fighting he has done for the Greeks, including saving the ships from Hector, and driving him off with a massive rock, he deserves the armor.^[3] However, Odysseus proves to be more eloquent, and the council gives him the armor. Ajax, "Unconquered", and furious, falls upon his own sword, "conquered by his [own] sorrow".^[4]

In Sophocles' play *Ajax*, a famous retelling of Ajax's demise takes place—after the armor is awarded to Odysseus the hero Ajax falls to the ground, exhausted. When he wakes up, he is under the influence of a spell from Athena. He goes to a flock of sheep and slaughters them, imagining they are the Achaean leaders, including Odysseus and Agamemnon. When he comes to his senses, covered in blood, and realizes what he has done, with diminished honor he decides that he prefers to kill himself rather than to live in shame. He does so with the same sword Hector gave him when they exchanged presents.^[5] From his blood sprang a red flower, as at the death of Hyacinthus, which bore on its leaves the initial letters of his name *Ai*, also expressive of lament.^[6] His ashes were deposited in a golden urn on the Rhoetean promontory at the entrance of the Hellespont.

Homer is somewhat vague about the precise manner of Ajax's death but does ascribe it to his loss in the dispute over Achilles's shield: when Odysseus visits Hades, he begs the soul of Ajax to speak to him, but Ajax, still resentful over the old quarrel, refuses and descends silently back into Erebus.

Like Achilles, he is represented (although not by Homer) as living after his death in the island of Leuke at the mouth of the Danube.^[7] Ajax, who in the post-Homeric legend is described as the grandson of Aeacus and the great-grandson of Zeus, was the tutelary hero of the island of Salamis, where he had a temple and an image, and where a festival called *Aianteia* was celebrated in his honour.^[8] At this festival a couch was set up, on which the panoply of the hero was placed, a practice which recalls the Roman Lectisternium. The identification of Ajax with the family of Aeacus was chiefly a matter which concerned the Athenians, after Salamis had come into their possession, on which occasion Solon is said to have inserted a line in the *Iliad* (2.557–558), for the purpose of supporting the Athenian claim to the island. Ajax then became an Attic hero; he was worshiped at Athens, where he had a statue in the market-place, and the tribe *Aiantis* was named after him. Pausanias also relates that a gigantic skeleton, its kneecap 5 inches (**unknown operator: u'strong'** cm) in diameter, appeared on the beach near Sigeion, on the Trojan coast; these bones were identified as those of Ajax.



The suicide of Ajax

Palace

In 2001, Yannis Lolos began excavating a Mycenaean palace on the island of Salamis which he supposed to be the home of the mythological Aiacid dynasty. The ruins have been excavated at a site near the village of Kanakia of Salamis, a few miles off the coast of Athens. The multi-story structure covers 750 m² (**unknown operator: u'strong'** sq ft) and had perhaps 30 rooms. The Trojan War is supposed by many to have occurred at the height of the Mycenaean civilization (see discussion of Troy VII), roughly the point at which this palace appears to have been abandoned.^[9]

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External links

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Ajax the Lesser

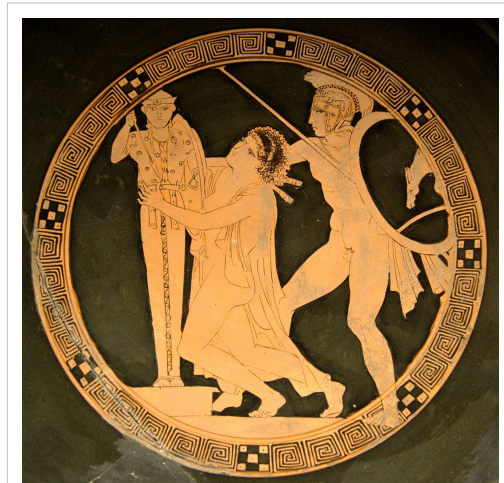
For other uses of this name, see Ajax (disambiguation).

Ajax (Ancient Greek: Αἴας) was a Greek mythological hero, son of Oileus, the king of Locris. He was called the "lesser" or "Locrian" Ajax,^[1] to distinguish him from Ajax the Great, son of Telamon. He was the leader of the Locrian contingent during the Trojan War. He is a significant figure in Homer's *Iliad* and is also mentioned in the *Odyssey*^[2] and Virgil's *Aeneid*. In Etruscan legend, he was known as *Aivas Vilates*.

Mythology

His mother's name was Eriopis. According to Strabo, he was born in Naryx in Locris,^[3] where Ovid calls him *Narycius Heroes*.^[4] According to the *Iliad*,^[5] he led his Locrians in forty ships against Troy.^[6] He is described as one of the great heroes among the Greeks. When the grammatical dual form of Ajax is used in the *Iliad*, it was once believed that it indicated the lesser Ajax fighting side-by-side with Telamonian Ajax, but now it is generally thought that that usage refers to the Greater Ajax and his brother Teucer. In battle, he wore a linen cuirass (λιμνοθώραξ), was brave and intrepid, especially skilled in throwing the spear and, next to Achilles, the swiftest of all the Greeks.^[7]

In the funeral games at the pyre of Patroclus, he contended with Odysseus and Antilochus for the prize in the footrace; but Athena, who was hostile towards him and favored Odysseus, made him stumble and fall, so that he won only the second prize.^[8] On his return from Troy, his vessel was wrecked on the Whirling Rocks (Γυραὶ πέτραι), but he himself escaped upon a rock through the assistance of Poseidon and would have been saved in spite of Athena, but he said that he would escape the dangers of the sea in defiance of the immortals. In punishment for this presumption, Poseidon split the rock with his trident and Ajax was swallowed up by the sea.^[9]



Ajax the Lesser raping Cassandra

In later traditions, this Ajax is called a son of Oileus and the nymph Rhene and is also mentioned among the suitors of Helen.^{[10][11]} After the taking of Troy, it is said he rushed into the temple of Athena, where Cassandra had taken refuge, and was embracing the statue of the goddess in supplication. Ajax violently dragged her away to the other captives.^{[12][13][14][15]} According to some writers, he even raped Cassandra inside the temple.^{[16][17][18]} Odysseus, at least, accused him of this crime and Ajax was to be stoned to death, but saved himself by establishing his innocence with an oath.^[19] The whole charge was sometimes said to have been an invention of Agamemnon, who wanted to have Cassandra for himself.

Death



Poseidon killing Ajax the Lesser

Whether true or not, Athena still had cause to be indignant, as Ajax had dragged a supplicant from her temple. According to the *Bibliotheca*, no one had realised that Ajax had raped Cassandra until Calchas, the Greek seer, warned the Greeks that Athena was furious at the treatment of her priestess and she would destroy the Greek ships if they didn't kill him immediately. Despite this, Ajax managed to hide in the altar of an unnamed deity where the Greeks, fearing divine retribution should they kill him and destroy the altar, allowed him to live. When the Greeks left without killing Ajax, despite their sacrifices Athena became so angry that she

persuaded Zeus to send a storm that sank many of their ships. When Ajax finally left Troy, Athena hit his ship with a thunderbolt, but Ajax still survived, managing to cling onto a rock. He boasted that even the gods could not kill him and Poseidon, upon hearing this, split the rock with his trident, causing Ajax to eventually drown. Thetis buried him when the corpse washed up on Myconos.^[20] Other versions depict a different death for Ajax, showing him dying when on his voyage home. In these versions, when Ajax came to the Capharean Rocks on the coast of Euboea, his ship was wrecked in a fierce storm, he himself was lifted up in a whirlwind and impaled with a flash of rapid fire from Athena in his chest, and his body thrust upon sharp rocks, which afterwards were called the rocks of Ajax.^{[15][21]}

After his death his spirit dwelt in the island of Leuce.^[22] The Opuntian Locrians worshiped Ajax as their national hero, and so great was their faith in him that when they drew up their army in battle, they always left one place open for him, believing that, although invisible to them, he was fighting for and among them.^{[22][23]} The story of Ajax was frequently made use of by ancient poets and artists, and the hero who appears on some Locrian coins with the helmet, shield, and sword is probably this Ajax.^[24]

Other accounts of his death are offered by Philostratus and the scholiast on Lycophron.^{[25][26]}

Art

The abduction of Cassandra by Ajax was frequently represented in Greek works of art, for instance on the chest of Cypselus described by Pausanias and in extant works.^[27]

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Nestor

In Greek mythology, **Nestor of Gerenia** (Ancient Greek: Νέστωρ Γερένιος, *Nestōr Gerēnios*) was the son of Neleus and Chloris and the King of Pylos. He became king after Heracles killed Neleus and all of Nestor's siblings. His wife was either Eurydice or Anaxibia; their children included Peisistratus, Thrasymedes, Pisidice, Polycaste, Straticus, Aretus, Echephron, and Antilochus.

Biography

Nestor was an Argonaut, helped fight the centaurs, and participated in the hunt for the Calydonian Boar. He and his sons, Antilochus and Thrasymedes, fought on the side of the Achaeans in the Trojan War. Though Nestor was already very old when the war began (he was believed to be about 110), he was noted for his bravery and speaking abilities. In the *Iliad*, he often gives advice to the younger warriors and advises Agamemnon and Achilles to reconcile. He is too old to engage in combat himself, but he leads the Pylian troops, riding his chariot, and one of his horses is killed by an arrow shot by Paris. He also had a solid gold shield. Homer frequently calls him by the epithet "the Gerenian horseman." At the funeral games of Patroclus, Nestor advises Antilochus on how to win the chariot race. Antilochus was later killed in battle by Memnon.

In the *Odyssey*, Nestor and those who were part of his army had safely returned to Pylos since they didn't take part in the looting of Troy upon the Greek's victory in the Trojan War. Odysseus's son Telemachus travels to Pylos to inquire about the fate of his father. Nestor receives Telemachus kindly and entertains him lavishly but is unable to furnish any information on his father's fate. Also appearing in the *Odyssey* are Nestor's wife Eurydice (a mythological figure separate from Orpheus's wife of the same name) and their remaining living sons: Echephron, Stratus, Perseus, Aretus, Thrasymedes and Peisistratus. Nestor also had a daughter named Polycaste.



According to some,^[1] this cup shows Hecamede mixing kykeon for Nestor. Tondo of an Attic red-figure cup, c. 490 BC. From Vulci.

Nestor's advice

In the *Odyssey*, too, Homer's admiration of Nestor is tempered by some humor at his expense: Telemachus, having returned to Nestor's home from a visit to Helen of Troy and Menelaus (where he has sought further information on his father's fate), urges Peisistratus to let him board his vessel immediately to return home rather than being subjected to a further dose of Nestor's rather overwhelming sense of hospitality.



Nestor and his sons sacrifice to Poseidon on the beach at Pylos (Attic red-figure calyx-krater, 400–380 BC)

Nestor's advice in the *Iliad* has also been interpreted to have sinister undertones. For example, when Patroclus comes to Nestor for advice in Book 11, Nestor persuades him that it is urgent for him to disguise himself as Achilles. Karl Reinhardt argues that this is contrary to what Patroclus really originally wanted – in fact, he is only there to receive information on behalf of Achilles about the wounded Machaon.^[2] Reinhardt notes that an "unimportant errand left behind by an all-important one ... Patroclus' role as messenger is crucial and an ironic purpose permeates the encounter."^[3]

It is interesting to note that Homer offers contradictory portrayals of Nestor as a source of advice. On one hand, Homer portrays Nestor as a wise man; Nestor repeatedly offers advice to the Achaeans that has been claimed to be anachronistic in Homer's time – for example, arranging the armies by tribes and clans or effectively using chariots in battle.^[4] Yet at the same time Nestor's advice is frequently ineffective. Some examples include Nestor accepting without question the dream Zeus plants in Agamemnon in Book 2 and urging the Achaeans to

battle, instructing the Achaeans in Book 4 to use spear techniques that in actuality would be disastrous,^[5] and in Book 11 giving advice to Patroclus that ultimately leads to his death. Yet Nestor is never questioned and instead is frequently praised.^[6]

Hanna Roisman explains that the characters in the *Iliad* ignore the discrepancy between the quality of Nestor's advice and its outcomes is because, in the world of the *Iliad*, "outcomes are ultimately in the hands of the ever arbitrary and fickle gods ... heroes are not necessarily viewed as responsible when things go awry." In the *Iliad*, people are judged not necessarily in the modern view of results, but as people.^[7] Therefore Nestor should be viewed as a good counselor because of the qualities he possesses as described in his introduction in Book 1 – as a man of "sweet words," a "clear-voiced orator," and whose voice "flows sweeter than honey."^[8] These are elements that make up Nestor, and they parallel the elements that Homer describes as part of a good counselor at *Iliad* 3.150–152. Therefore, "the definition tells us that Nestor, as a good advisor, possesses the three features ... that it designates."^[7] Nestor is a good counselor inherently, and the consequences of his advice have no bearing on that, a view that differs from how good counselors are viewed today.

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Sources

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- Homer. *Odyssey* III, 157, 343.
- *The Merchant of Venice* Act I, Scene I, Line 55.
- In James Joyce's *Ulysses*, the character of Deasy stands for Nestor.

Diomedes

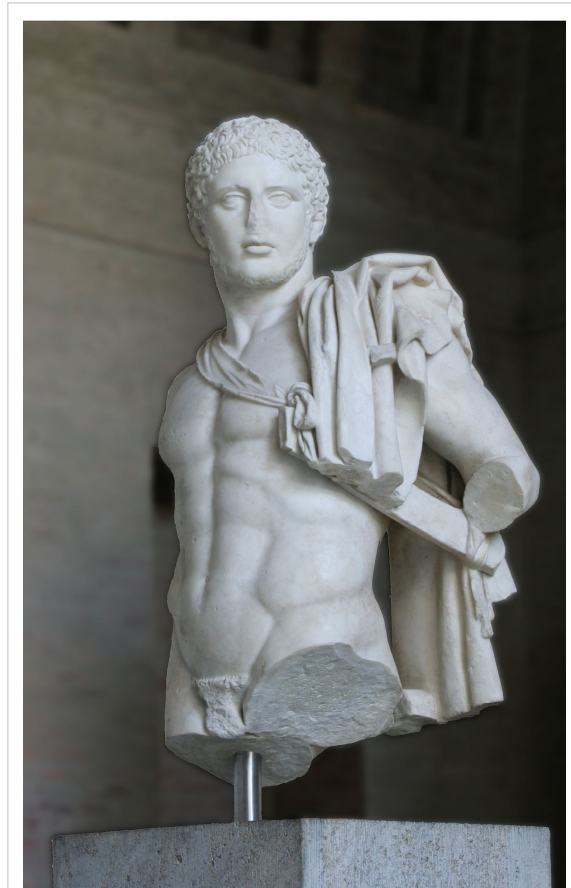
Diomedes or **Diomed** (Ancient Greek: Διομήδης *Diomēdēs* "'God-like cunning" or "advised by Zeus"'") is a hero in Greek mythology, known for his participation in the Trojan War.

He was born to Tydeus and Deipyle and later became King of Argos, succeeding his maternal grandfather, Adrastus. In Homer's *Iliad* Diomedes is regarded alongside Ajax as one of the best warriors of all the Achaeans (behind only Achilles in prowess). In Virgil's *Aeneid* he is one of the warriors who entered the Trojan Horse shortly before the sack of Troy.

Early myths

Diomedes was, on his father's side, an Aetolian, and on his mother's an Argive. This is so because his father Tydeus left Calydon and fled to Argos in order to avoid being persecuted by his uncle Agrius. He married King Adrastus's daughter Deipyle.

Tydeus participated in the expedition, known as the Seven Against Thebes. This



Diomedes, King of Argos - Roman copy of a statue by Kresilas from ca. 430 BC. Glyptothek, München.

expedition failed and all leaders, including Tydeus were killed. Tydeus was Athena's favourite warrior at the time, and when he was dying she wanted to offer him a magic elixir (which she had obtained from her father) that would make him immortal. However, she withdrew the intended privilege in apparent disgust when Tydeus gobbled down the brains of the hated enemy who had wounded him.

According to some, Diomedes was 4 years old when his father was killed. At the funeral of their fathers, the sons of Seven Against Thebes (Aegialeus, Alcmaeon, Amphilocus, Diomedes, Euryalus, Promachus, Sthenelus, Thersander) met and vowed to vanquish Thebes one day. They called themselves "Epigoni" because they were born "after everything has happened".

Ten years later, the Epigoni appointed Alcmaeon as their commander in chief and gathered an army. They added to their forces from Argos contingents from Messenia, Arcadia, Corinth, and Megara. This army, however, was a small one compared to the forces of Thebes.

The Epigoni war is remembered as the most important expedition in Greek Mythology before the Trojan War. It was a favorite topic for epics, but, unfortunately, all of these epics are now lost. The main battle took place at Glisas where the warrior Aegialeus (son of King Adrastus of Argos) was slain by King Laodamas. Diomedes was 15 years old by then and was considered the mightiest of all. Vanquished by the Epigoni, the Thebans followed the counsel of Tiresias and fled away. Epigoni took the city and most Argive commanders returned rich to their countries after having sacked Thebes, but the city they handed over to Thersander.

Adrastus died of grief when he learned that his son Aegialeus had perished in the battle at Glisas. Aegialeus was married to Comaetho, daughter of Tydeus (sister of Diomedes). Diomedes, in turn, married Aegialeus's daughter Aegialia when he returned from battle. He was then appointed as the King of Argos and thus became one of the most powerful rulers of Hellas at such a young age.

According to some, Diomedes ruled Argos for more than five years and brought much wealth and stability to the city during his time. He was a skilled politician and was greatly respected by other rulers. He still kept an eye on Calydonian politics (his father's homeland), and when the sons of Agrius (led by Thersites) put Oeneus (Diomedes' grandfather) in jail and their own father on the throne, Diomedes decided to restore the throne to Oeneus.

Diomedes attacked and ceded the Kingdom, slaying all the traitors except Thersites, Onchestus (who escaped to Peloponnesus) and Agrius (who killed himself) restoring his grandfather to the throne. Later, Oeneus passed the Kingdom to his son-in-law Andraemon and headed for Argos to meet Diomedes. He was assassinated on the way (in Arcadia) by Thersites and Onchestus. Unable to find the murderers, Diomedes founded a mythical city called "Oenoe" at the place where his grandfather was buried to honour his death. Later, Thersites fought against the Trojans in the Trojan War and noble Diomedes did not mistreat him (however, Thersites was hated by all Achaeans). In fact, when Thersites was brutally slain by Achilles (after having mocked him when the latter cried over



Athena counseling Diomedes shortly before he enters the battle - (Schlossbrücke, Berlin).

Penthesilia's dead body) Diomedes was the only person who wanted to punish Achilles.

After some years, Diomedes became one of the Suitors of Helen and, as such, he was bound by The Oath of Tyndareus, which established that all the suitors would defend and protect the man who was chosen as Helen's husband against any wrong done against him in regard to his marriage. Accordingly, when the seducer Paris stole Menelaus' wife, all those who had sworn the oath were summoned by Agamemnon (Menelaus' brother), so that they would join the coalition that was to sail from Aulis to Troy in order to demand the restoration of Helen and the Spartan property that was stolen.

Trojan War

Diomedes is known primarily for his participation in the Trojan War. According to Homer, Diomedes enters the war with a fleet of 80 ships, third only to the contributions of Agamemnon (100 ships) and Nestor (90). Both Sthenelus and Euryalus (former Epigoni) fought under his command with their armies. Sthenelus was the driver of Diomedes' chariot and probably his closest friend. All the troops from Argos, Tiryns, Troezen and some other cities were headed by Diomedes. According to some interpretations, Diomedes is represented in the epic as the most valiant soldier of the war, who never commits hubris. He is often referred to by Homer as the youngest amongst the Achaean warrior-kings, and yet the most powerful fighter, second only to Achilles. On other occasions, Ajax is also characterized as the second-best warrior of the Achaean force. However, during Patroclus' funeral games, Diomedes was overwhelming Ajax when his comrades advised the fighting to stop, lest one of them get injured. In this way, he won first place in the armed sparring tournament.

Apart from his outstanding fighting abilities and courage, Diomedes is on several crucial occasions shown to possess great wisdom, which is acknowledged and respected by his much older comrades, including Agamemnon and Nestor. Diomedes, Nestor and Odysseus were some of the greatest Achaean strategists. Throughout the *Iliad*, Diomedes and Nestor are frequently seen speaking first in war-counsel.

Instances of Diomedes' maturity and intelligence as described in parts of the epic:

- In Book IV Agamemnon taunts Diomedes by calling him a much inferior fighter than his father. His enraged comrade Sthenelus urges Diomedes to stand up to Agamemnon by responding that he has bested his father and avenged his death by conquering "Seven-gated" Thebes. Diomedes responded that it was part of Agamemnon's tasks as a leader to urge forward the Achaean soldiers, and that men of valour should have no problem withstanding such insults. However, when Agamemnon uses the same kind of taunting to Odysseus, the latter responds with anger.
- Although Diomedes dismissed Agamemnon's taunting with respect, he did not hesitate to point out Agamemnon's inadequacy as a leader in certain crucial occasions. In Book IX, Agamemnon proposes going back to Hellas because Zeus has turned against them. Diomedes then reminds him of the previous insult and tells him that his behavior is not proper for a leader. "but they all held their peace, till at last Diomed of the loud battle-cry made answer saying, 'Son of Atreus, I will chide your folly, as is my right in council. Be not then aggrieved that I should do so. In the first place you attacked me before all the Danaans and said that I was a coward and no soldier...'" Achaean council - Book IX
- Diomedes also points out that because Troy is destined to fall, they should continue fighting regardless of Zeus' interventions. "If your own mind is set upon going home—go—the way is open to you; the many ships that followed you from Mycene stand ranged upon the seashore; but the rest of us stay here till we have sacked Troy. Nay though these too should turn homeward with their ships, Sthenelus and myself will still fight on till we reach the goal of Ilius, for heaven was with us when we came."
- "The sons of the Achaeans shouted applause at the words of Diomed, and presently Nestor rose to speak. 'Son of Tydeus,' said he, 'in war your prowess is beyond question, and in council you excel all who are of your own years; no one of the Achaeans can make light of what you say nor gainsay it, but you have not yet come to the end of the whole matter. You are still young- you might be the youngest of my own children—still you have spoken wisely

and have counselled the chief of the Achaeans not without discretion;" Achaean council - Book IX

- When Agamemnon tried to appease Achilles's wrath so that he would fight again, by offering him many gifts, Nestor appointed three envoys to meet Achilles (Book IX). They had to return empty handed; Achilles had told them that he will leave Troy and never return. The Achaeans were devastated at this. Diomedes points out the folly of offering these gifts, "Most noble son of Atreus, king of men, Agamemnon, you ought not to have sued the son of Peleus nor offered him gifts. He is proud enough as it is, and you have encouraged him in his pride still further". Here, Diomedes makes a prediction based on his reasoning that eventually becomes true. He says that even if Achilles somehow manages to leave Troy, he will never be able to stay away from battle because he cannot change the fate; "let him go or stay—the gods will make sure that he will fight." In Book XV, Zeus says to Hera that he had already made a plan to make sure that Achilles will eventually enter the battle.
- Diomedes also encourages Agamemnon to take the lead of tomorrow's battle. "But when fair rosy-fingered morn appears, forthwith bring out your host and your horsemen in front of the ships, urging them on, and yourself fighting among the foremost." (Book IX) Agamemnon accepts this counsel and the next day's battle starts with his "aristeia" where he becomes the hero of the day.

Instances of Diomedes's valour and expertise in battle according to quotations:

- "As he (Diomedes) spoke he sprang from his chariot, and his armour rang so fiercely about his body that even a brave man might well have been scared to hear it." - Book IV
- "Diomed looked angrily at him and answered: "Talk not of flight, for I shall not listen to you: I am of a race that knows neither flight nor fear, and my limbs are as yet unwearied. I am in no mind to mount, but will go against them even as I am;" Battle with Aeneas and Pandarus - Book V
- "But the son of Tydeus caught up a mighty stone, so huge and great that as men now are it would take two to lift it; nevertheless he bore it aloft with ease unaided," Battle with Aeneas - Book V
- "Father Jove, grant that the lot fall on Ajax, or on the son of Tydeus, or upon the king of rich Mycene himself." Duel of Hector - Book VII
- "The old man instantly began cutting the traces with his sword, but Hector's fleet horses bore down upon him through the rout with their bold charioteer, even Hector himself, and the old man would have perished there and then had not Diomed been quick to mark" Saving Nestor - Book VII
- "They all held their peace, but Diomed of the loud war-cry spoke saying, 'Nestor, gladly will I visit the host of the Trojans over against us, but if another will go with me I shall do so in greater confidence and comfort. When two men are together, one of them may see some opportunity which the other has not caught sight of; if a man is alone he is less full of resource, and his wit is weaker.'" Achaean plans - Book X

Diomedes' place among Achaeans

Although he was the youngest of all Achaean kings, he is considered the most experienced leader by some scholars (he had fought more battles than others, including the most important war expedition before the Trojan War – even old Nestor had not participated in such military work).

Second only to Achilles, Diomedes is considered to be the mightiest and the most skilled warrior among the Achaeans. He even got the better of Ajax, son of Telamon, in an armed sparring tournament, but the bout was called off prematurely. He vanquished (and could have killed) Hector (the greatest Trojan Warrior) on two occasions and Aeneas (the second best Trojan warrior) once.

He and Odysseus were the only heroes who participated in tasks such as night missions which demanded discipline, bravery, courage, cunning and resourcefulness.

Diomedes received the most direct divine help and protection. He was the favorite warrior of Athena (who even drove his chariot once). He was also the only person who attacked (and even wounded) Olympian Immortals. He was also given divine vision to identify immortals on one occasion.

Only Diomedes and Menelaus were offered immortality and became gods in post Homeric mythology.

Weapons

The god Hephaestus made Diomedes' cuirass for him. He was the only Greek warrior apart from Achilles who carried such an arsenal of gear made by Hera's most skilled son. He also had a round shield with the mark of a boar. In combat, he also carried a spear as well as his father's sword and possessed a golden cuirass. This golden armor bore a crest of a boar on the breast. It was created by a mortal smith but was blessed by Athena, who gave it to Tydeus. When he died, it passed to Diomedes. A skilled smith created the sword for Tydeus, which bore designs of a lion and a big boar.

Diomedes in Aulis

In Aulis, where Achaean leaders gathered, Diomedes met his brother in arms Odysseus, with whom he shared several adventures. Both of them were favorite heroes of Athena and were very similar in character. They began to combine their efforts and actions already when being in Aulis.

Diomedes and Odysseus were Agamemnon's most trusted officers. When the sacrifice of Iphigenia (Agamemnon's daughter) became a necessity for Achaeans to sail away from Aulis, king Agamemnon had to choose between sacrificing his daughter and resigning from his post of high commander among Achaeans (in which case Diomedes would probably become the leader). When he decided to sacrifice his daughter to Artemis, Diomedes and Odysseus were among the few Achaean officers familiar with his plans. The two unscrupulous friends carried out this order of Agamemnon by luring Iphigenia from Mycenae to Aulis, where murder, disguised as wedding, awaited her.

Palamedes

Once in Troy, Odysseus murdered Palamedes (the commander who outwitted Odysseus in Ithaca, forcing him to stand by his oath and join the alliance), drowning him while he was fishing. According to other stories, when Palamedes advised the Greeks to return home, Odysseus accused him of being a traitor and forged false evidence and found a fake witness to testify against him. Palamedes was stoned to death.

Some say that Diomedes conspired with Odysseus against Palamedes, and under the pretence of having discovered a hidden treasure, they let him down into a well and there stoned him to death.^[1] Others say that, though Diomedes guessed or knew about the plot, he did not try to defend Palamedes, because Odysseus was essential for the fall of Troy.

Diomedes in the *Iliad*

Diomedes is one of the main characters in the *Iliad*. This epic narrates a series of events that took place during the final year of the great war. Diomedes is the key fighter in the first third of the epic. According to some interpretations, Diomedes is represented in the epic as the most valiant soldier of the war, who never committed hubris. He is regarded as the perfect embodiment of traditional heroic values because he displays virtues such as courage while fighting in the front ranks for honor and glory, respect for his commander Agamemnon and the gods, and finally self-restraint/humility to remain within mortal limits.

Diomedes' *aristeia* ("excellence"—the great deeds of a hero) begins in Book V and continues in Book VI. Some scholars claim that this part of the epic was originally a separate, independent poem (describing the feats of Diomedes) that Homer adapted and included in the *Iliad*. Diomedes' *aristeia* represents many of his heroic virtues such as outstanding fighting skills, bravery, divine protection/advice, carefully planned tactics of war, leadership, humility and self-restraint.

Book V begins with Athena, the war-like goddess of wisdom putting valour into the heart of her champion warrior. She also makes a stream of fire flare from his shield and helmet. Diomedes then slays a number of Trojan warriors including Phegeus (whose brother was spirited away by Hera's son before being slain by Diomedes) until Pandarus wounds him with an arrow. Diomedes then prays to Athena for the slaughter of Pandarus. She responds by offering

him a special vision to distinguish gods from men and asks him to wound Aphrodite if she ever comes to battle. She also warns him not to engage any other god.

He continues to make havoc among the Trojans by killing Astynous, Hypeiron, Abas, Polyidus, Xanthus, Thoon, Echemmon and Chromius (two sons of Priam). Finally, Aeneas (son of Aphrodite) asks Pandarus to mount his chariot and fight Diomedes together. Sthenelus warns his friend of their approach.

Diomedes faces this situation by displaying both his might and wisdom. Although he can face both of these warriors together, he knows that Aphrodite may try to save her son. He also knows the history of Aeneas' two horses (they descend from Zeus's immortal horses). Since he has to carry out Athena's order, he orders Sthenelus to steal the horses while he faces Aphrodite's son.

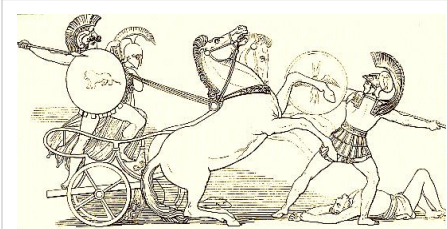
Pandarus throws his spear first and brags that he has killed the son of Tydeus. The latter responds by saying "at least, one of you will be slain" and throws his spear. Pandarus is killed and Aeneas is left to fight Diomedes (now unarmed). Not bothering with weapons, Diomedes picks up a huge stone and crushes his enemy's hip with it. Aeneas faints and is rescued by his mother before Diomedes can kill him. Mindful of Athena's orders, Diomedes runs after Aphrodite and wounds her arm. Dropping her son, the goddess flees towards Olympus. Apollo now comes to the rescue of the Trojan hero. Disregarding Athena's advice, Diomedes attacks Apollo twice before Apollo warns him not to match himself against immortals. Respecting Apollo, Diomedes then withdraws himself from that combat. Although he has failed in killing Aeneas, following his orders, Sthenelus has already stolen the two valuable horses of Aeneas. Diomedes then became the owner of the second best pair of horses (after Achilles' immortal ones) among Achaeans.



Diomedes attacking Aeneas-Athena stands behind him

Aphrodite complained to her mother about Diomedes' handiwork. The latter reminded her of mighty Heracles (now, an Olympian himself) who held the record of wounding not one but two Olympians as a human.

The transgression of Diomedes by attacking Apollo had its consequences. Urged by Apollo, Ares came to the battlefield to help Trojans. Identifying the god of war, Diomedes protected the Achaeans by ordering them to withdraw towards their ships. Hera saw the havoc created by her son and together with Athena, she came to the Achaeans' aid. When Athena saw Diomedes resting near his horses, she mocked him, reminding him of Tydeus who frequently disobeyed her advice. Diomedes replied "Goddess, I know you truly and will not hide anything from you. I am following your instructions and retreating for I know that Ares is fighting among the Trojans". Athena answered "Diomedes most dear to my heart, do not fear this immortal or any other god for I will protect you." Throwing Sthenelus out of the chariot and mounting it herself, the goddess (who invented the chariot and taught humans to drive it) drove straight at Ares. She also put on the helmet of Hades, making her invisible to even gods. Ares saw only Diomedes in the chariot and threw his spear which was caught by Athena. Diomedes then threw his spear (which was guided by Athena) at Ares, wounding his stomach. The god screamed in a voice of 10,000 men and fled away. This was how Diomedes became the only human to wound two Olympians in a single day.



Diomedes and Athena attacking Ares

In Book VI, Diomedes continued his feats by killing Axylus and Calesius. Hector's brother Helenus described Diomedes' fighting skills in this manner: "He fights with fury and fills men's souls with panic. I hold him mightiest of them all; we did not fear even their great champion Achilles, son of an immortal though he be, as we do this man: his rage is beyond all bounds, and there is none can vie with him in prowess."

Helenus then sent Hector to the city of Troy to tell their mother about what was happening. According to the instructions of Helenus, Priam's wife gathered matrons at the temple of Athena in the acropolis and offered the goddess the largest, fairest robe of Troy. She also promised the sacrifice of twelve heifers if Athena could take pity on them and break the spear of Diomedes. Athena, of course, did not grant it.

Meanwhile, one brave Trojan named Glaucus challenged the son of Tydeus to a single combat. Impressed by his bravery and noble appearance, Diomedes inquired if he were an immortal in disguise. Although Athena has previously told him not to fear any immortal, Diomedes displayed his humility by saying, "I will not fight any more immortals."

Glaucus told the story of how he was descended from Bellerophon who killed the Chimaera and the Amazons. Diomedes realized that his grandfather Oeneus hosted Bellerophon, and so Diomedes and Glaucus must also be friends. They resolved to not fight each other and Diomedes proposed exchanging their armours. Cunning Diomedes only gave away a bronze armour for the golden one he received. The phrase 'Diomedian swap' originated from this incident.

In Book VII, Diomedes was among the nine Achaean warriors who came forward to fight Hector in a single combat. When they cast lots to choose one among those warriors, the Achaeans prayed "Father Zeus, grant that the lot fall on Ajax, or on the son of Tydeus, or upon Agamemnon." Ajax was chosen to fight Hector.



Diomedes and Glaucus

Idaeus of the Trojans came for a peace negotiation, and he offered to give back all the treasures Paris stole plus more—everything except Helen. In the Achaean council, Diomedes was the first one to speak: "Let there be no taking, neither treasure, nor yet Helen, for even a child may see that the doom of the Trojans is at hand." These words were applauded by all and Agamemnon said, "This is the answer of the Achaeans."

In Book VIII, Zeus ordered all other deities to not interfere with the battle. He made the Trojans stronger so they could drive away the Achaeans from battle. Then he thundered aloud from Ida and sent the glare of his lightning upon the Achaeans. Seeing this, all the great Achaean warriors—including the two Ajaxes, Agamemnon, Idomeneus and Odysseus—took flight. Nestor could not escape because one of his horses was wounded by Paris' arrow. He might have perished if not for Diomedes.

This incident is the best example for Diomedes' remarkable bravery. Seeing that Nestor's life was in danger, the son of Tydeus shouted for Odysseus' help. The latter ignored his cry and ran away. Left alone in the battleground, Diomedes took his stand before Nestor and ordered him to take Sthenelus' place. Having Nestor as the driver, Diomedes bravely rushed towards Hector. Struck by his spear, Hector's driver Eniopeus was slain. Taking a new driver, Arceptolemus, Hector advanced forward again. Zeus saw that both Hector and Arceptolemus were about to be slain by Diomedes and decided to intervene. He took his mighty Thunderbolt and shot its lightning in front of Diomedes' chariot. Nestor advised Diomedes to turn back since no person should try to transgress Zeus' will. Diomedes answered, "Hector will talk among the Trojans and say, 'The son of Tydeus fled before me to the ships.' This is the vaunt he will make, and may the earth then swallow me." Nestor responded, "Son of Tydeus, though Hector say that you are a coward the Trojans and Dardanians will not believe him, nor yet the wives of the mighty warriors whom you have laid low." Saying these words, Nestor turned the horses back. Hector, seeing that they had turned back from battle, called Diomedes a "woman and a coward" and promised to slay him personally. Diomedes thought three times of turning back and fighting Hector, but Zeus thundered from heaven each time.

When all the Achaean seemed discouraged, Zeus sent an eagle as a good omen. Diomedes was the first warrior to read this omen, and he immediately attacked the Trojans and killed Agelaus.

At the end of the day's battle, Hector made one more boast, "Let the women each of them light a great fire in her house, and let watch be safely kept lest the town be entered by surprise while the host is outside... I shall then know whether brave Diomed will drive me back from the ships to the wall, or whether I shall myself slay him and carry off his bloodstained spoils. Tomorrow let him show his mettle, abide my spear if he dare. I ween that at break of day, he shall be among the first to fall and many another of his comrades round him. Would that I were as sure of being immortal and never growing old, and of being worshipped like Minerva and Apollo, as I am that this day will bring evil to the Argives."

These words subsequently turned out to be wrong. In spite of careful watch, Diomedes managed to launch an attack upon the sleeping Trojans. Hector was vanquished by Diomedes yet again and it was Diomedes that ended up being worshipped as an immortal.

In Book IX, Agamemnon started shedding tears and proposed to abandon the war for good because Zeus was supporting the Trojans. Diomedes pointed out that this behavior was inappropriate for a leader like Agamemnon. He also declared that he will never leave the city unvanquished for the gods were originally with them. This speech signifies the nature of Homeric tradition where fate and divine interventions have superiority over human choices. Diomedes believed that Troy was fated to fall and had absolute and unconditional faith in victory.

However, this was one of the two instances where Diomedes' opinion was criticized by Nestor. He praised Diomedes' intelligence and declared that no person of such young age could equal Diomedes in counsel. He then criticized Diomedes for not making any positive proposal to replace Agamemnon's opinion – a failure which Nestor ascribed to his youth. Nestor believed in the importance of human choices and proposed to change Achilles' mind by offering many gifts. This proposal was approved by both Agamemnon and Odysseus.

The embassy failed because Achilles himself had more faith in his own choices than fate or divine interventions. He threatened to leave Troy, never to return believing that this choice will enable him to live a long life. When the envoys returned, Diomedes criticized Nestor's decision and Achilles' pride saying that Achilles' personal choice of leaving Troy is of no importance (therefore, trying to change it with gifts is useless). Diomedes said, "Let Achilles stay or leave if he wishes to, but he will fight when the time comes. Let's leave it to the gods to set his mind on that." (In Book 15, Zeus tells Hera that he has already planned the method of bringing Achilles back to battle, confirming that Diomedes was right all along)

Book X – Agamemnon and Menelaus rounded up their principal commanders to get ready for battle the next day. They woke up Odysseus, Nestor, Ajax, Diomedes and Idomeneus. While the others were sleeping inside their tents, king Diomedes was seen outside his tent clad in his armour sleeping upon an ox skin, already well-prepared for any problem he may encounter at night. During the Achaean council held, Agamemnon asked for a volunteer to spy on the Trojans. Again, it was Diomedes who stepped forward.

The son of Tydeus explained "If another will go with me, I could do this in greater confidence and comfort. When two men are together, one of them may see some opportunity which the other has not caught sight of; if a man is alone he is less full of resource, and his wit is weaker." These words inspired many other heroes to step forward. Agamemnon put Diomedes in charge of the mission and asked him to choose a companion himself. The hero instantly selected Odysseus for he was loved by Athena and was quick witted. Although Odysseus had deserted Diomedes in the battlefield that very day, instead of bashing him, the latter praised his bravery in front of others. Odysseus' words hinted that he actually did not wish to be selected.

Meanwhile, in a similar council held by Hector, not a single prince or king would volunteer to spy on Achaeans. Finally Hector managed to send Dolon, a good runner, after making a false oath (promising him Achilles' horses after the victory).

On their way to the Trojan camp, Diomedes and Odysseus discovered Dolon approaching the Achaean camp. The two kings lay among the corpses till Dolon passed them and ran after him. Dolon proved to be the better runner but Athena infused fresh strength into the son of Tydeus for she feared some other Achaean might earn the glory of being first to hit Dolon. Diomedes threw his spear over Dolon's shoulders and ordered him to stop.

Dolon gave them several valuable pieces of information. According to Dolon, Hector and the other councilors were holding conference by the monument of great Ilus, away from the general tumult. In addition, he told about a major weakness in Trojan army. Only the Trojans had watchfires; they, therefore, were awake and kept each other to their duty as sentinels; but the allies who have come from other places were asleep and left it to the Trojans to keep guard. It is never explained in the epic why Dolon, specially mentioned as a man of lesser intelligence, came to notice this flaw while Hector (in spite of all his boasting) completely missed/ignored it.

On further questioning, Diomedes and Odysseus learnt that among the various allies, Thracians were the most vulnerable for they had come last and were sleeping apart from the others at the far end of the camp. Rhesus was their king and Dolon described Rhesus' horses in this manner; "His horses are the finest and strongest that I have ever seen, they are whiter than snow and fleeter than any wind that blows".

Having truthfully revealed valuable things, Dolon expected to be taken as a prisoner to the ships, or to be tied up, while the other two found out whether he had told them the truth or not. But Diomedes told him: "You have given us excellent news, but do not imagine you are going to get away, now that you have fallen into our hands. If we set you free tonight, there is nothing to prevent your coming down once more to the Achaean ships, either to play the spy or to meet us in open fight. But if I lay my hands on you and take your life, you will never be a nuisance to the Argives again." Having said this, Diomedes cut off the prisoner's head with his sword, without giving him time to plead for his life.

Although the original purpose of this night mission was spying on the Trojans, the information given by Dolon persuaded the two friends to plan an attack upon the Thracians. They took the spoils and set them upon a tamarisk tree in honour of Athena. Then they went where Dolon had indicated, and having found the Thracian king, Diomedes let him and twelve of his soldiers pass from one kind of sleep to another; for they were all killed in their beds, while asleep. Meanwhile, Odysseus gathered the team of Rhesus' horses. Diomedes was wondering when to stop. He was planning to kill some more Thracians and stealing the chariot of the king with his armour when Athena advised him to back off for some other god may warn the Trojans.

This first night mission demonstrates another side of these two kings where they employed stealth and treachery along with might and bravery but more importantly fulfills one of the prophecies required for the fall of Troy: that Troy will not fall while the horses of Rhesus feed upon its plains (According to another version of the story, it had been foretold by an oracle that if the stallions of Rhesus were ever to drink from the river Scamander, which cuts across the Trojan plain, then the city of Troy would never fall. The Greeks never allowed the horses to drink from that river for all of them were stolen by Diomedes and Odysseus shortly after their arrival). These horses were given to king Diomedes.

According to some scholars, the rest of Thracians, deprived of their king, left Troy to return to their kingdom. This was another bonus of the night mission.



Diomedes and Odysseus stealing
Rhesus' horses

Book XI- In the forenoon, the fight was equal, but Agamemnon turned the fortune of the day towards the Achaeans until he got wounded and left the field. Hector then seized the battlefield and slew many Achaeans. Beholding this, Diomedes and Odysseus continued to fight with a lot of valor, giving hope to the Achaeans. The king of Argos slew Thymbraeus, two sons of Merops, and Agastrophus.

Hector soon marked the havoc Diomedes and Odysseus were making, and approached them. Diomedes immediately threw his spear at Hector, aiming for his head. This throw was dead accurate but the helmet given by Apollo saved Hector's life. Yet, the spear was sent with such great force that Hector swooned away. Meanwhile, Diomedes ran towards Hector to get his spear. Hector recovered and mingled with the crowd, by which means he saved his life from Diomedes for the second time. Frustrated, Diomedes shouted after Hector calling him a dog. The son of

Tydeus, frequently referred to as the lord of war cry, was not seen speaking disrespectful words to his enemies before.

Shortly after that Paris jumped up in joy for he managed to achieve a great feat by fixing Diomedes' foot to the ground with an arrow. Dismayed at this, Diomedes said "Seducer, a worthless coward like you can inflict but a light wound; when I wound a man though I but graze his skin it is another matter, for my weapon will lay him low. His wife will tear her cheeks for grief and his children will be fatherless: there will he rot, reddening the earth with his blood, and vultures, not women, will gather round him." Under Odysseus' cover, Diomedes withdrew the arrow but unable to fight with a limp, he retired from battle.

Book XIV- The wounded kings (Diomedes, Agamemnon and Odysseus) held council with Nestor regarding the possibility of Trojan army reaching their ships. Agamemnon proposed drawing the ships on the beach into the water but Odysseus rebuked him and pointed out the folly of such council. Agamemnon said, "Someone, it may be, old or young, can offer us better counsel which I shall rejoice to hear." Wise Diomedes said, "Such a one is at hand; he is not far to seek, if you will listen to me and not resent my speaking though I am younger than any of you ... I say, then, let us go to the fight as we needs must, wounded though we be. When there, we may keep out of the battle and beyond the range of the spears lest we get fresh wounds in addition to what we have already, but we can spur on others, who have been indulging their spleen and holding aloof from battle hitherto." This council was approved by all.

Book XXIII- In the funeral games of Patroclus, Diomedes (though wounded) won all the games he played. First, he participated in the chariot race where he had to take the last place in the starting-line (chosen by casting lots). Diomedes owned the fastest horses after Achilles (who did not participate). A warrior named Eumelus took the lead and Diomedes could have overtaken him easily but Apollo (who had a grudge against him) made him drop the whip. Beholding this trick played by the sun-god, Athena reacted with great anger. She not only gave the whip back to the son of Tydeus but also put fresh strength to his horses and went after Eumelus to break his yoke. Poor Eumelus was thrown down and his elbows, mouth, and nostrils were all torn. Antilochus told his horses that there is no point trying to overtake Diomedes for Athena wishes his victory. Diomedes won the first prize – "a woman skilled in all useful arts, and a three-legged cauldron".

Next, he fought with great Ajax in an armed sparring contest where the winner was to draw blood first. Ajax attacked Diomedes where his armour covered his body and achieved no success. Ajax owned the biggest armour and the tallest shield which covered most of his body leaving only two places vulnerable; his neck and armpits. So, Diomedes maneuvered his spear above Ajax's shield and attacked his neck, drawing blood. The Achaean leaders were scared that another such blow would kill Ajax and they stopped the fight. Diomedes received the prize for the victor. This is the final appearance of Diomedes in the epic.

It is seen that although Diomedes received Athena's help without asking for it, Odysseus prayed for help even before the start of the footrace he participated.

It is generally accepted that Athena is closest to Diomedes in the epic. In the early traditions, Athena (a virgin goddess) is described as being shy in the company of males. But she spoke to the hero without any disguise in Book V where he could see her in the true divine form (a special vision was granted to him). Such an incident doesn't happen even in the other Homeric Epic, The Odyssey where Athena disguises herself while speaking to Odysseus.

Amazons

Penthesileia led a small army of Amazons to Troy on the last year of the Trojan War. Two of her warriors named Alcibie and Derimacheia were slain by Diomedes.

A dispute with Achilles

Penthesileia killed many Greeks in battle. She was, however, no match for Achilles, who killed her. When Achilles stripped Penthesileia of her armour, he saw that the woman was young and very beautiful, and seemingly falls madly in love with her. Achilles then regrets killing her. Thersites mocked Achilles for his behaviour, because the hero was mourning his enemy. Enraged, Achilles killed Thersites with a single blow to his face.

Thersites was so quarrelsome and abusive in character, that only his cousin, Diomedes, mourned for him. Diomedes wanted to avenge Thersites, but the other leaders persuaded the two mightiest Achaean warriors against fighting among themselves. Harkening to prayers of comrades, the two heroes reconciled at last. According to Quintus Smyrnaeus, the Greek leaders agreed to the boon of returning her body to the Trojans for her funeral pyre. According to some other sources, Diomedes angrily tossed Penthesileia's body into the river, so neither side could give her decent burial.^[2]

Achilles' funeral games

After Achilles' death, the Achaeans piled him a mound and held magnificent games in his honor. According to Apollodorus, Diomedes won the footrace. Smyrnaeus says that the wrestling match between him and Ajax the Great came to a draw.

Neoptolemus

As Troy could not be taken regardless of the efforts that were made, ever new conditions were added by the seers as to what was necessary to do in order to take the city. So, in the same way as before it had been declared that Troy could not be taken without Achilles, now it was prophesied that Troy could not be taken if Neoptolemus (Achilles's son) would not come and fight. According to Quintus Smyrnaeus, Odysseus and Diomedes came to Scyros to bring him to the war at Troy. According to the Epic Cycle, Odysseus and Phoenix did this.

Another Prophecy

The Greek seer named Calchas prophesied that Philoctetes (whom the Greeks had abandoned on the island of Lemnos due to the vile odour from snakebite) and the bow of Heracles are needed to take Troy. Philoctetes hated Odysseus, Agamemnon and Menelaus, because they were responsible for leaving him behind.

Diomedes and Odysseus were charged with achieving this prophecy also. Knowing that Philoctetes would never agree to come with them, they sailed to the island and stole the bow of Heracles by a trick. Heracles (now a god) or Athena later persuaded Philoctetes to join the Achaeans again. This bow and arrows were used by Philoctetes (who came with Diomedes and Odysseus to Troy) to slay Paris; this was a requirement to the fall of Troy.

According to some, Diomedes and Odysseus were sent into the city of Troy to negotiate for peace after the death of Paris.^[3]

The Palladium

After Paris' death, Helenus left the city but was captured by Odysseus. The Greeks somehow managed to persuade the seer/warrior to reveal the weakness of Troy. The Greeks learnt from Helenus, that Troy would not fall, while the Palladium, image or statue of Athena, remained within Troy's walls. The difficult task of stealing this sacred statue again fell upon the shoulders of Odysseus and Diomedes.



Diomedes with The Palladium-Johan Tobias Sergel, Konstakademin, Stockholm.



Diomedes with the Palladium approaches an altar

Odysseus, some say, went by night to Troy, and leaving Diomedes waiting, disguised himself and entered the city as a beggar. There he was recognized by Helen, who told him where the Palladium was. Diomedes then climbed the wall of Troy and entered the city. Together, the two friends killed several guards and one or more priests of Athena's temple and stole the Palladium "with their bloodstained hands".^[4] Diomedes is generally regarded as the person who physically removed the Palladium and carried it away to the ships. There are several statues and many ancient drawings of him with the Palladium.



Diomedes and Odysseus stealing the Palladium

According to the *Little Iliad*, on the way to the ships, Odysseus plotted to kill Diomedes and claim the Palladium (or perhaps the credit for gaining it) for himself. He raised his sword to stab Diomedes in the back. Diomedes was alerted to the danger by glimpsing the gleam of the sword in the moonlight. He turned round, seized the sword of Odysseus, tied his hands, and drove him along in front, beating his back with the flat of his sword.^[5] From this action was said to have arisen the Greek proverbial expression “Diomedes’ necessity”, applied to those who act under compulsion. (The incident was commemorated in 1842 by the French sculptor Pierre-Jules Cavelier in a muscle-bound plaster statue). Because Odysseus was essential for the destruction of Troy, Diomedes refrained from punishing him.

Diomedes took the Palladium with him when he left Troy. According to some, he brought it to Argos where it remained until Ergiaeus, one of his descendants, took it away with the assistance of the Laconian Leagrus, who conveyed it to Sparta.^[6] Others say that he brought it to Italy. Some say that Diomedes was robbed of the palladium by Demophon in Attica, where he landed one night on his return from Troy, without knowing where he was.^[7] According to another tradition, the Palladium failed to bring Diomedes any luck due to the unrighteous way he obtained it. He was informed by an oracle, that he should be exposed to unceasing sufferings unless he restored the sacred image to the Trojans. Therefore he gave it back to his enemy, Aeneas.^[8]



Diomedes with The Palladium-Glyptothek
Munich

Stealing the Palladium after killing the priests was viewed as the greatest transgression committed by Diomedes and Odysseus by Trojans. Odysseus used this sentiment to his advantage when he invented the Trojan Horse stratagem.

The Wooden Horse

This stratagem invented by Odysseus made it possible to take the city. Diomedes was one of the warriors inside. He slew many Trojan warriors inside the city.

According to Quintus Smyrnaeus, while slaughtering countless Trojans, Diomedes met an elderly man named Ilioneus who begged for mercy. Despite his fury of war, Diomedes held back his sword so that the old man might speak. Ilioneus begged "Oh compassionate my suppliant hands! To slay the young and valiant is a glorious thing; but if you smite an old man, small renown waits on your prowess. Therefore turn from me your hands against young men, if you hope ever to come to grey hairs such as mine." Firmly resolved in his purpose, Diomedes answered. "Old man, I look to attain to honored age; but while my Strength yet exists, not a single foe will escape me with life. The brave man makes an end of every foe." Having said this, Diomedes slew Ilioneus.

Some of the other Trojan warriors slain by Diomedes during that night were Coroebus (who came to Troy to win the hand of Cassandra), Eurydamas and Eurycoon.

Aftermath

After the fall of Troy

During the sacking and looting of the great city, the seeress Cassandra, daughter of Priam and Hecuba, clung to the statue of Athena, but the Lesser Ajax raped her. Odysseus, unsuccessfully, tried to persuade the Greek leaders to put Ajax to death, by stoning the Locrian leader (to divert the goddess's anger). Diomedes and other Greek leaders disagreed because Ajax himself clung to the same statue of Athena in order to save himself. The failure of Greek leaders to punish Ajax the lesser for the sacrilege of Athena's altar resulted in earning her wrath. However, she did not punish Diomedes.

Athena caused a quarrel between Agamemnon and Menelaus about the voyage from Troy. Agamemnon then stayed on to appease the anger of Athena. Diomedes and Nestor held a discussion about the situation and decided to leave immediately. They took their vast armies and left Troy. They managed to reach home safely but Athena called upon Poseidon to bring a violent storm upon most of other Greek ships.

The Palamedes affair haunted several Greek Leaders including Diomedes. Palamedes's brother Oeax went to Argos and reported to Aegialia, falsely or not, that her husband was bringing a woman he preferred to his wife. Others say that Aegialia herself had taken a lover, Cometes (son of Sthenelus), being persuaded to do so by Palamedes's father Nauplius. Still others say that despite Diomedes's noble treatment of her son Aeneas, Aphrodite never managed to forget about the Argive spear that had once pierced her flesh in the fields of Troy. She helped Aegialia to obtain, not one but many lovers. (According to different traditions, Aegialeia was living in adultery with Hippolytus, Cometes or Cyllabarus.)^[9]

In any case Aegialia, being helped by the Argives, prevented Diomedes from entering the city. Or else, if he ever entered Argos, he had to take sanctuary at the altar of Hera, and thence flee with his companions by night.^[10] Cometes was shortly the king of Argos, in Diomedes' absence, but was quickly replaced by the rightful heir, Cyanippus, who was the son of Aegialeus.

Life in Italy

Diomedes then migrated to Aetolia, and thence to Daunia (Apulia) in Italy. He went to the court of King Daunus, King of the Daunians. The king was honored to accept the great warrior. He begged Diomedes for help in warring against the Messapians, for a share of the land and marriage to his daughter. Diomedes agreed the proposal, drew up his men and routed the Messapians. He took his land which he assigned to the Dorians, his followers.

Diomedes later married Daunus's daughter Euippe and had two sons named Diomedes and Amphinomus. Some say that, after the sack of Troy, Diomedes came to Libya (due to a storm), where he was put in prison by King Lycus (who planned on sacrificing him to Ares). It is said that it was the king's daughter Callirrhoe, who loosing Diomedes from his bonds, saved him. Diomedes is said to have thanklessly sailed away, and the girl killed herself with a halter.^[11]

Cities founded by Diomedes

He founded about ten Italian cities (in the eastern part of Italy) including Argyrippa (Arpi/Arpus Hippium/Argos Hippiion), Aequeum Tuticum, Beneventum and Brundisium. Also Canusium, Venafrum, Salapia, Spina, Garganum, Sipus (near Santa Maria di Siponto) were said to have been founded by him.^[12]

Some say that he named a city as "Venusia" (or Aphrodisia) after Venus (Aphrodite) as a peace-offering. When war broke out between Aeneas and Turnus, Turnus tried to persuade Diomedes to aid them in the war against the Trojans. Diomedes told them he had fought enough Trojans in his lifetime, and urged Turnus that it was best to make peace with Aeneas than to fight the Trojans. He also said that his purpose in Italy is to live in peace.^[13] Virgil's Aeneid describes the beauty and prosperity of Diomedes' kingdom.

The worship and service of gods and heroes was spread by Diomedes far and wide : in and near Argos he caused temples of Athena to be built.^[14] His armour was preserved in a temple of Athena at Luceria in Apulia, and a gold chain of his was shown in a temple of Artemis in Peucetia. At Troezen he had founded a temple of Apollo Epibaterius, and instituted the Pythian games there.^[15]

Other sources claim that Diomedes had one more meeting with his old enemy Aeneas where he gave the Palladium back to the Trojans.

Death

Neither Homer nor Virgil gives the reader any foreshadowing of Diomedes's death except for a passage in the *Iliad* in which Dione, Aphrodite's mother, comforts the goddess of love (after she has been injured by Diomedes), telling her daughter that "the man who fights the gods does not live long" and will not be welcomed home from war by his children on his lap (5.407-409).

End of Diomedes in Italy

He lived a long life but there is no clear record as to how he died. Some claims that he was buried or mysteriously disappeared on one of the islands in the Adriatic called after him (Diomedaeae). Others say that he did not have to face a mortal death.

Legend has it that, on his death, the albatrosses got together and sang a song (their normal call). This is where the family name for albatrosses comes from (Diomedaeae).

Afterlife

According to the post Homeric stories, Diomedes was given immortality by Athena, which she had not given to his father. Pindar says that Diomedes became a minor god in southern Italy or the Adriatic. He was worshipped as a divine being under various names in Italy where Statues of him existed at Argyripa, Metapontum, Thurii, and other places.

There are traces in Greece also of the worship of Diomedes. Greek sources say that he was placed among the gods together with the Dioscuri.

Diomedes was worshipped as a hero not only in Greece, but on the coast of the Adriatic, as at Thurii and Metapontum. At Argos, his native place, during the festival of Athena, his shield was carried through the streets as a relic, together with the Palladium, and his statue was washed in the river Inachus.

In the *Divine Comedy* poem *Inferno*, Dante Alighieri sees Diomedes in the Eighth Circle of Hell, where deceivers are imprisoned for eternity in a sheet of flame. His deceits include those used to steal the Palladium and king Rhesus' horses. The same damnation is imposed on Odysseus, who is also punished for having persuaded Achilles to fight in the Trojan war, without telling him that this would lead to his inevitable death. Diomedes and Odysseus are also here for their part in the Trojan Horse.

The Troilus and Cressida legend

Diomedes plays an important role in the medieval legend of Troilus and Cressida, in which he becomes the girl's new lover when she is sent to the Greek camp to join her traitorous father. In Shakespeare's play of that title, Diomedes is often seen fighting Troilus over her.

References

- [1] Dict. Cret. ii. 15 ; comp. Paus. x. 31. § 1.
- [2] Tzetz. ad Lycoph. 993 ; Dict. Cret. iv. 3.
- [3] Dict. Cret. v. 4
- [4] Virg. Aen. ii. 163
- [5] Eustath. ad Hom. p. 822.
- [6] Plut. Quaest. Graec. 48.
- [7] Paus. ii. 28. § 9.
- [8] Serv. ad Aen. ii. 166, iii. 407, iv. 427, v. 81.
- [9] Dictys Cretensis 6. 2; Tzetzes on Lycophron 609; Servius on *Aeneid* 8. 9.
- [10] Tzetzes on Lycophron 602
- [11] Plut. Parall. Gr. et Rom. 23.
- [12] Serv. ad Aen viii. 9, xi. 246; Strab. vi. pp. 283, 284; Plin. H. N. iii. 20; Justin, xii. 2.
- [13] Paus. i. 11; Serv. ad Aen. viii. 9.
- [14] Plut. de Flum. 18; Paus. ii. 24. § 2
- [15] Schol. ad Pind. Nem. x. 12 ; Scylax, Peripl. p. 6; comp. Strab. v. p. 214, &c.

External links

- Greek Mythology Link (<http://homepage.mac.com/cparada/GML/Diomedes2.html>)
- Greek Mythology Index (<http://www.mythindex.com/greek-mythology/D/Diomedes.html>)

Teucer

This article is about Teucer, son of King Telamon of Salamis. For Teucer, son of Scamander and Idaea, see King Teucer.

In Greek mythology **Teucer**, also **Teucrus** or **Teucris** (Greek: Τεῦκρος, *Teukros*), was the son of King Telamon of Salamis Island and his second wife Hesione, daughter of King Laomedon of Troy. He fought alongside his half-brother, Ajax, in the Trojan War and is the legendary founder of the city of Salamis on Cyprus. Through his mother, Teucer was the nephew of King Priam of Troy and the cousin of Hector and Paris - all of whom he fought against in the Trojan War.

History

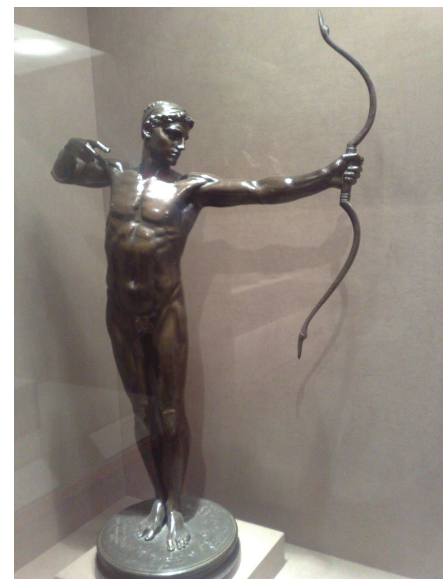
During the Trojan War, Teucer was mainly a great archer, who loosed his shafts from behind the giant shield of his half-brother Ajax the Great. When Hector was driving the Achaeans back toward their ships, Teucer gave the Argives some success by killing many of the charging Trojans, including Hector's charioteer, Archeptolemus son of Iphitos. However, every time he shot an arrow at Hector, Apollo, the protector of the Trojans, would foil the shot - an ironic reference to the fact that Apollo would guide Paris' arrow into Achilles' heel.^[1] At one point in his rage at Teucer's success, Hector picked up a huge rock and flung it at him. The rock injured Teucer, so that he retired from the fighting for a certain period of time^[2]. He took up a spear to fight in the war after his bow was broken by Zeus^[3]. He once again challenged Hector, and narrowly avoided the path of Hector's flying javelin in the ensuing battle. He was also one of the Danaans to enter the Trojan Horse. In total, Teucer slew thirty Trojans during the war^[4]; of those Homer mentions Aretaon, Orsilochus, Ormenus, Ophelestes, Daetor, Chromius, Lycophontes, Amopaon, Melanippus, Prothoon and Periphetes^[5], as well as the aforementioned Archeptolemus. He also wounded Glaucus, son of Hippolochus^[6].

After Ajax's suicide, Teucer guarded the body to make sure it was buried, insulting Menelaus and Agamemnon when they tried to stop the burial. Finally Odysseus persuaded Agamemnon to let the burial happen.^[7] Because of his half-brother's suicide, Teucer stood trial before his father, where he was found guilty of negligence for not bringing his dead half-brother's body or his arms back with him. He was disowned by his father, wasn't allowed back on Salamis Island, and set out to find a new home. His departing words were immortalised in the seventh ode of the Roman poet Horace, in which he exhorts his companions to "*nil desperandum*", "despair in no way", and announces "*cras ingens iterabimus aequor*", "tomorrow we shall set out upon the vast ocean". This speech has been given a wider applicability in relation to the theme of voyages of discovery, also found in the *Ulysses* of Dante and Tennyson.

Teucer eventually joined King Belus II in his campaign against Cyprus, and when the island was seized, Belus handed it over to him in reward for his assistance. Teucer founded the city of Salamis on Cyprus, which he named after his home state^[8]. He further married Eune, daughter of Cyprus or Cinyras, and had by her a daughter Asteria^[9].

The name Teucer is believed to be related to the name of the West Hittite God Tarku (East Hittite Teshub) -- the Indo-European Storm God -- a role which explains his relationship to Belus, who is the Semitic storm god Baal.^[10]

Local legends of the city of Pontevedra (Galicia) relate the foundation of this city to Teucer (*Teucro*), although this seems to be based more on the suspicions that Greek traders might have arrived to that area in ancient times^[11] -



Statue of Teucer by Sir William Hamo Thornycroft

hence introducing a number of Greek stories - and not historical facts. The city is sometimes poetically called "The City of Teucer" and its inhabitants *teucrinos*. A number of sporting clubs in the municipality use names related to Teucer.

References

- [1] Homer, *Iliad*, 8. 265 ff; 12. 329 ff, 364 ff; 15. 442 ff, 478 ff
 - [2] *Il.* 8. 320 - 330
 - [3] *Il.* 15. 460 - 480
 - [4] Hyginus, *Fabulae* 114.
 - [5] *Il.* 6. 30; 8. 274 ff; 14. 515
 - [6] *Il.* 12. 387
 - [7] Ajax (Sophocles)
 - [8] Servius on *Aeneid*, 1. 619 - 621
 - [9] Tzetzes on Lycophron, 450; Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 1. 3. 2
 - [10] Farnell "Greece and Babylon: A Comparative History of Greek, Anatolian and Mesopotamian Religion."
 - [11] *Ireland in Galicia* (<http://193.147.33.52/amerigin/index.php?page=ireland-in-galicia>), by the Amergin University Institute of Research in Irish Studies (<http://193.147.33.52/amerigin/index.php?page=what-is-amerigin>), University of A Coruña. Access date 01-10-2010
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Creatures Families

Dragons in Greek mythology

Dragons play a role in Greek mythology.

Ladon

Ladon was the serpent-like dragon that twined round the tree in the Garden of the Hesperides and guarded the golden apples. Ladon was also said to have as many as one hundred heads. He was overcome and possibly slain by Heracles. After a few years, the Argonauts passed by the same spot, on their chthonic return journey from Colchis at the opposite end of the world, and heard the lament of "shining" Aigle, one of the Hesperides, and viewed the still-twitching Ladon (*Argonautica*, book iv). The creature is associated with the constellation Draco. Ladon was given several parentages, each of which placed him at an archaic level in Greek myth: the offspring of "Ceto, joined in love with Phorcys" (Hesiod, *Theogony* 333) or of Typhon, who was himself serpent-like from the waist down, and Echidna (*Bibliothèque* 2.113; Hyginus, Preface to *Fabulae*) or of Gaia herself, or in her Olympian manifestation, Hera: "The Dragon which guarded the golden apples was the brother of the Nemean lion" asserted Ptolemy Hephaestion (recorded in his *New History* V, lost but epitomized in Photius, *Myriobiblion* 190).

Lernaean Hydra

The Lernaean Hydra was a dragon-like water serpent with fatally venomous breath, blood and fangs, a daughter of Typhon and Echidna. The creature was said to have anywhere between five and 100 heads, although most sources put the number somewhere between seven and nine. For each head cut off, one or two more grew back in its place. It had an immortal head which would remain alive after it was cut off. Some accounts claim that the immortal head was made of gold. It lived in a swamp near Lerna and frequently terrorized the townsfolk until it was slain by Heracles, who cut the heads off, with the help of his nephew Iolaus, who then singed the oozing stump with a blazing firebrand to prevent any new heads from growing, as the second of his Twelve Labors. Hera sent a giant crab to distract Heracles, but he simply crushed it under his foot. Hera then placed it in the heavens as the constellation Cancer. After slaying the serpent, Heracles buried the immortal head under a rock and dipped his arrows in the creature's blood to make them fatal to his enemies. In one version, the poisoned arrows would eventually prove to be the undoing of his centaur tutor Chiron, who was placed in the heavens as the constellation Centaurus.

Pytho or Python

In Greek mythology Python was the earth-dragon of Delphi, always represented in the vase-paintings and by sculptors as a serpent. Various myths represented Python as being either male or female (a drakaina).^[1] Python was the chthonic enemy of Apollo, who slew it and remade its former home his own oracle, the most famous in Greece.

There are various versions of Python's birth and death at the hands of Apollo. In the earliest, the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, little detail is given about Apollo's combat with the serpent or its parentage. The version related by Hyginus [1] holds that when Zeus lay with the goddess Leto, and she was to deliver Artemis and Apollo, Hera sent Python to pursue her throughout the lands, so that she could not be delivered wherever the sun shone. Thus when the infant was grown he pursued the python, making his way straight for Mount Parnassus where the serpent dwelled, and chased it to the oracle of Gaia at Delphi, and dared to penetrate the sacred precinct and kill it with his arrows beside the rock cleft where the priestess sat on her tripod. The priestess of the oracle at Delphi became known as the Pythia,

after the place-name Pytho, which was named after the rotting (πύθειν) of the serpent's corpse after it was slain.

The Colchian Dragon

(Georgian: კოლხური დრაკონი) This immense serpent, a child of Typhon and Echidna, guarded the Golden Fleece at Colchis.^[2] It was said to never sleep, rest, or lower its vigilance. According to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the monster had a crest and three tongues.^[3] When Jason went to retrieve the Fleece, the witch Medea put the dragon to sleep with her magic and drugs,^[4] or perhaps Orpheus lulled it to sleep with his lyre. Afterwards, Medea herself had dragons pull her chariot.

The Ismenian Dragon

The Ismenian Dragon, of the spring of Ismene at Thebes, Greece, was slain by the hero Cadmus.^[5] It was the offspring of Ares, who later turned the hero into a serpent.

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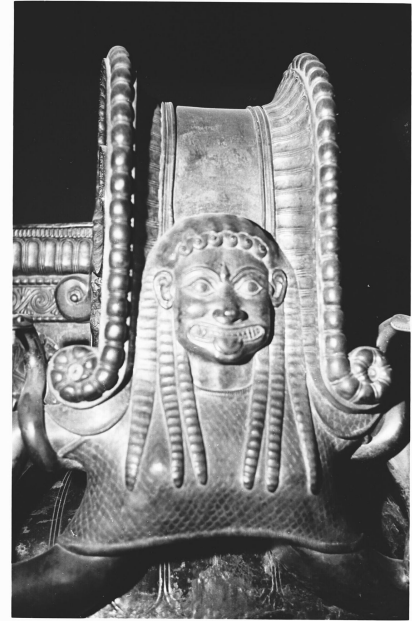
External links

- Theoi Project - Drakon Hesperios (<http://www.theoi.com/Ther/DrakonHesperios.html>)

Gorgon

In Greek mythology, the **Gorgon** (plural: **Gorgons**) (Greek: Γοργών or Γοργώ *Gorgon/Gorgo*) was a terrifying female creature. The name derives from the Greek word **gorgós**, which means "dreadful." While descriptions of Gorgons vary across Greek literature, the term commonly refers to any of three sisters who had hair of living, venomous snakes, and a horrifying visage that turned those who beheld it to stone. Traditionally, while two of the Gorgons were immortal, Stheno and Euryale, their sister Medusa was not, and was slain by the mythical demigod and hero Perseus.

Gorgons were a popular image of Greek mythology, appearing in the earliest of written records of Ancient Greek religious beliefs such as those of Homer. Because of their legendary gaze, images of the Gorgons were put upon objects and buildings for protection. For example, an image of a Gorgon holds the primary location at the pediment of the temple at Corfu. It is the oldest stone pediment in Greece and is dated to c. 600 BC.



A Gorgon head on the outside of each of the Vix-krater's three handles. From the grave of the Celtic Lady of Vix, 510 BC

Origins



Minoan gold ring of Mochlos, 1600-1500 BC. A sea-goddess with a monstrous head in a boat. Heraklion Archaeological Museum

The concept of the Gorgon is at least as old in mythology as Perseus and Zeus. The name is Greek, being derived from "gorgos" and translating as *terrible* or *dreadful*.

Author Marija Gimbutas (*Language of the Goddess*) believed she saw the prototype of the *Gorgoneion* in Neolithic art motifs, especially in anthropomorphic vases and terracotta masks inlaid with gold.

A female figure, probably a sea-goddess is depicted on a Minoan gold ring from the island Mochlos in Crete. The goddess has a monstrous head, and she is sitting in a boat. A holy tree is depicted, probably related with the Minoan cult of the tree.^[1]

The large eyes, as well as Athena's "flashing" eyes, are symbols termed "the divine eyes" by Gimbutas (who did not originate the perception), appearing also in Athena's bird, the owl. They can be represented by spirals, wheels, concentric circles, swastikas, firewheels, and other images.

The fangs of the Gorgons are wild boar tusks, while some representations lack fangs and show a forced smile displaying large teeth and sometimes a protruding tongue.^[2] In some cruder representations, blood flowing under the head of the Gorgon has been mistaken for a beard or wings.

Some reptilian attributes such as a belt made of snakes and snakes emanating from the head or entwined in the hair as in the temple of Artemis in Corfu, are symbols likely derived from the guardians closely associated with early

Greek religious concepts at the centers of oracles. It's skin was said to be made of impenetrable scales ^[3]

Other possible origins have been suggested from similarities of the Babylonian creature Humbaba in the Gilgamesh epic.

Classical tradition



An archaic Gorgon (around 580 BC), as depicted on a pediment from the temple of Artemis in Corfu, on display at the Archaeological Museum of Corfu

Gorgons are often depicted as having wings , brazen claws, the tusks of boars and scaly skin . The oldest oracles were said to be protected by serpents and a Gorgon image was often associated with those temples. Lionesses or sphinxes are frequently associated with the Gorgon as well. The powerful image of the Gorgon was adopted for the classical images and myths of Zeus and Athena, perhaps being worn in continuation of a more ancient imagery. The Gorgons were said to be the daughters of the sea god Phorcys and his sister-wife, Ceto the sea monster. Homer, the author of the oldest known work of European literature, speaks only of one Gorgon, whose head is represented in the Iliad as fixed in the centre of the aegis of Zeus:

"About her shoulders she flung the tasselled aegis, fraught with terror...and therein is the head of the dread monster, the Gorgon, dread and awful, a portent of Zeus that beareth the aegis."(5.735ff)

Its earthly counterpart is a device on the shield of Agamemnon:

"...and therein was set as a crown the Gorgon, grim of aspect, glaring terribly, and about her were Terror and Rout."(11.35ff)



First century BC mosaic of Alexander the Great bearing on his armor an image of the **Gorgon** as an aegis - Naples National Archaeological Museum



Athena wears the ancient form of the Gorgon head on her aegis, as the huge serpent who guards the golden fleece regurgitates Jason; cup by Douris, Classical Greece, early fifth century BC – Vatican Museum

The date of Homer was controversial in antiquity, and is no less so today. Herodotus said that Homer lived 400 years before his own day, which would place Homer about 850 BC,^[4] but other ancient sources gave dates much closer to the Trojan War.^[5] Those who believe that the stories of the Trojan War derive from a specific historical conflict usually date it to the twelfth or eleventh centuries BC, often preferring the dates given by Eratosthenes, 1194–1184 BC, which roughly corresponds with archaeological evidence of a catastrophic burning of Troy VIIa. For modern scholarship, 'the date of Homer' refers to the date of the poems as much as to the lifetime of an individual.

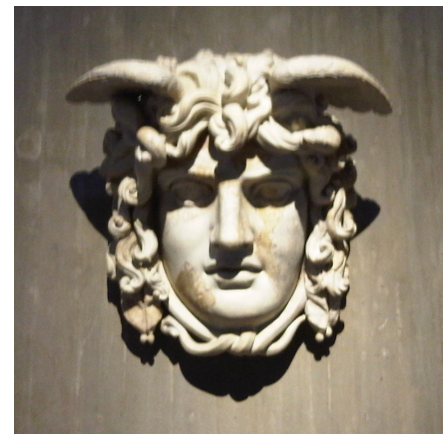
The scholarly consensus is that "the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* date from the extreme end of the ninth century BC or from the eighth, the *Iliad* being anterior to the *Odyssey*, perhaps by some decades."^[6] They are presumed to have existed as an oral tradition that eventually became set in historical records. Even at that early time the Gorgon is displayed as a vestige of ancient powers that preceded the historical transition to the beliefs of the Classical Greeks, displayed on the chest of Athene and Zeus.

In the *Odyssey*, the Gorgon is a monster of the underworld to which the earliest deities were cast:

"...and pale fear seized me, lest august Persephone might send forth upon me from out of the house of Hades the head of the Gorgon, that awful monster..."(11.635)

Around 700 BC, Hesiod (*Theogony*, *Shield of Heracles*) increases the number of Gorgons to three—Stheno (the mighty), Euryale (the far-springer), and Medusa (the queen), and makes them the daughters of the sea-god Phorcys and of Keto. Their home is on the farthest side of the western ocean; according to later authorities, in Libya. Ancient Libya is identified as a possible source of the deity, Neith, who was called Athene in Greece.

The Attic tradition, reproduced in Euripides (*Ion*), regarded the Gorgon as a monster, produced by Gaia to aid her children, the Titans, against the new Olympian deities and she was slain by Athena, who wore her skin thereafter. Of the three Gorgons, only Medusa is mortal.



Gorgon Medusa 200 AD (Romano-Germanic Museum in Cologne)

The *Bibliotheca* (2.2.6, 2.4.1, 2.4.2) provides a good summary of the Gorgon myth. Much later stories claim that each of three Gorgon sisters, Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa, had snakes for hair, and that they had the power to turn anyone who looked at them to stone.

According to Ovid (*Metamorphoses*), a Roman poet writing in 8 AD who was noted for accuracy regarding the Greek myths, Medusa alone had serpents in her hair, and that this was due to Athena (Roman Minerva) cursing her. Medusa had copulated with Poseidon (Roman Neptune) in a temple of Athena after he was aroused by the golden color of Medusa's hair. Athena therefore changed the enticing golden locks into serpents. Diodorus and Palaephatus mention that the Gorgons lived in the Gorgades, islands in the Aethiopian Sea. The main island was called Cerna and, according to Henry T. Riley, these islands may correspond to Cape Verde.^[7]

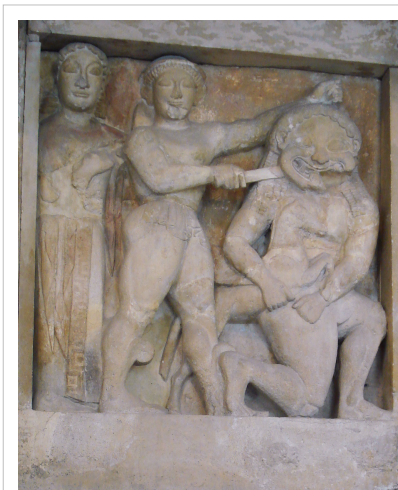


Winged goddess with a Gorgon's head. Orientalizing plate, ca. 600 BC, from Kameiros, Rhodes

It is mentioned that the Gorgons lived in the entrance of the Underworld in the Aenid.

Pausanias (5.10.4, 8.47.5, many other places), a geographer of the second century A.D., supplies the details of where and how the Gorgons were represented in Greek art and architecture.

Perseus and Medusa



Perseus killing Medusa, from the temple C at Selinus. Archaeological Museum of Palermo

In later myths, Medusa was the only one of the three Gorgons who was not immortal. King Polydectes sent Perseus to kill Medusa in hopes of getting him out of the way, while he pursued Perseus's mother, Danae.

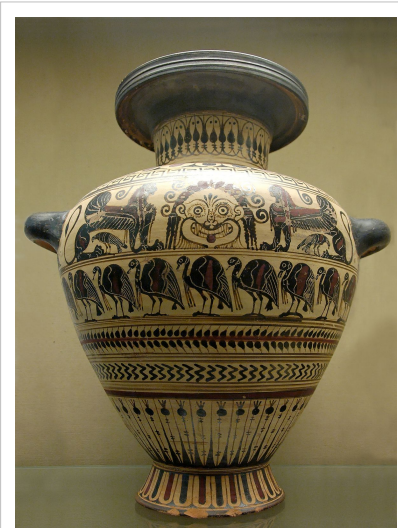
Some authors say that Perseus was armed with a scythe from Hermes (Roman equivalent Mercury) and a mirror (or a shield) from Athena. Perseus could safely cut off Medusa's head without turning to stone by looking only at her reflection in the shield. From the blood that spurted from her neck and jumping into the sea sprang Pegasus and Chrysaor, her sons by Poseidon. Other sources say that each drop of blood became a snake. He gave the head, which retained the power of turning into stone all who looked upon it, to Athena. She then placed it on the mirrored shield called Aegis and gave it to Zeus. Another source says that Perseus buried the head in the marketplace of Argos.

According to other accounts, either he or Athena used the head to turn Atlas into stone, transforming him into the Atlas Mountains that held up both heaven and earth.^[8] He also used it against a competing suitor.

Ultimately, he used it against King Polydectes. When Perseus returned to the court of the king, Polydectes asked if he had the head of Medusa. Perseus replied "here it is" and held it aloft, turning the whole court to stone.

Protective and healing powers

In Ancient Greece a *Gorgoneion* (or stone head, engraving, or drawing of a Gorgon face, often with snakes protruding wildly and the tongue sticking out between her fangs) frequently was used as an apotropaic symbol ^[9] and placed on doors, walls, floors, coins, shields, breastplates, and tombstones in the hopes of warding off evil. In this regard *Gorgoneia* are similar to the sometimes grotesque faces on Chinese soldiers' shields, also used generally as an amulet, a protection against the evil eye. Likewise, in Hindu mythology, Kali is often shown with a protruding tongue and snakes around her head.



Archaic (Etruscan) fanged goggle-eyed Gorgon flanked by standing winged lionesses or sphinxes on a *hydria* from Vulci, 540–530 BC

In Greek mythology, blood taken from the right side of a Gorgon could bring the dead back to life, yet blood taken from the left side was an instantly fatal poison. Athena gave a vial of the healing blood to Asclepius, which ultimately brought about his demise. Heracles is said to have obtained a lock of Medusa's hair (which possessed the same powers as the head) from Athena and to have given it to Sterope, the daughter of Cepheus, as a protection for the town of Tegea against attack. According to the later idea of Medusa as a beautiful maiden, whose hair had been changed into snakes by Athena, the head was represented in works of art with a wonderfully handsome face, wrapped in the calm repose of death.

Cultural depictions of Gorgons

Gorgons, especially Medusa, have been a common image and symbol in Western culture since their origins in Greek mythology, appearing in art, literature and elsewhere throughout history.



Disk-fibula with a gorgoneion. Bronze with repoussé decoration, second half of the 6th century BC. Louvre

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Anemoi

In ancient Greek religion and myth, the **Anemoi** (in Greek, **Ἄνεμοι** — "**winds**") were Greek wind gods who were each ascribed a cardinal direction from which their respective winds came (see Classical compass winds), and were each associated with various seasons and weather conditions. They were sometimes represented as mere gusts of wind, at other times were personified as winged men, and at still other times were depicted as horses kept in the stables of the storm god Aeolus, who provided Odysseus with the Anemoi in the *Odyssey*. The Spartans were reported to sacrifice a horse to the winds on Mount Taygetus.^[1] Astraeus, the astrological deity sometimes associated with Aeolus, and Eos, the goddess of the dawn, were the parents of the Anemoi, according to the Greek poet Hesiod.

Of the four chief Anemoi, **Boreas** (Aquilon in Latin) was the north wind and bringer of cold winter air, **Notus** was the south wind and bringer of the storms of late summer and autumn, and **Zephyrus** was the west wind and bringer of light spring and early summer breezes; **Eurus**, the east wind, was not associated with any of the three Greek seasons, and is the only one of these four Anemoi not mentioned in Hesiod's *Theogony* or in the Orphic Hymns. Additionally, four lesser Anemoi were sometimes referenced, representing the northeast, southeast, northwest, and southwest winds.

The deities equivalent to the Anemoi in Roman mythology were the **Venti** (Latin, "winds"). These gods had different names, but were otherwise very similar to their Greek counterparts, borrowing their attributes and being frequently conflated with them.

Boreas



Rape of Oreithyia by Boreas. Detail from an Apulian red-figure oinochoe, 360 BC

Boreas (Greek: Βορέας, *Boréas*) was the Greek god of the cold north wind and the bringer of winter. His name meant "North Wind" or "Devouring One". Boreas is depicted as being very strong, with a violent temper to match. He was frequently shown as a winged old man with shaggy hair and beard, holding a conch shell and wearing a billowing cloak.^{boreas} Pausanias wrote that Boreas had snakes instead of feet, though in art he was usually depicted with winged human feet.

Boreas was closely associated with horses. He was said to have fathered twelve colts after taking the form of a stallion, to the mares of Erichthonius, king of Troy. These were said to be able to run across a field of grain without trampling the plants. Pliny (*Natural History* iv.35 and viii.67) thought that mares might stand with their hindquarters to the North Wind, and bear foals without a stallion. The Greeks believed that his home was in Thrace, and Herodotus and Pliny both describe a

northern land known as Hyperborea ("Beyond the North Wind"), where people lived in complete happiness and had extraordinarily long lifespans.

Boreas was also said to have kidnapped Oreithyia, an Athenian princess, from the river Ilissus. Boreas had taken a fancy to Oreithyia, and had initially pleaded for her favours, hoping to persuade her. When this failed, he reverted to his usual temper and abducted her as she danced on the banks of the Ilissus. Boreas wrapped Oreithyia up in a cloud, raped her, and with her, Boreas fathered two sons—the Boreads, Zethes and Calais—and two daughters— Khione, goddess of snow, and Cleopatra.

From then on, the Athenians saw Boreas as a relative by marriage. When Athens was threatened by Xerxes, the people prayed to Boreas, who was said to have then caused winds to sink 400 Persian ships. A similar event had occurred twelve years earlier, and Herodotus writes:

Now I cannot say if this was really why the Persians were caught at anchor by the stormwind, but the Athenians are quite positive that, just as Boreas helped them before, so Boreas was responsible for what happened on this occasion also. And when they went home they built the god a shrine by the River Ilissus.

The abduction of Oreithyia was popular in Athens before and after the Persian War, and was frequently depicted on vase paintings. In these paintings, Boreas was portrayed as a bearded man in a tunic, with shaggy hair that is sometimes frosted and spiked. The abduction was also dramatized in Aeschylus's lost play *Oreithyia*.

In late accounts, Boreas was the father of Lycurgus (by another woman) and the lover of the nymph Pitys.



Greco-Buddhist fragment of the wind god Boreas, Hadda, Afghanistan

Aquilo

The Roman equivalent of Boreas was **Aquilo**, or **Aquilon**. An alternate, rarer name used for the northern wind was **Septentrio**, a word derived from *septem triones* ("seven oxen") referring to the seven prominent stars in the northern constellation Ursa Major. *Septentrio* is also the source of the obscure word *septentrional*, a synonym for *boreal* meaning "northern".



Tower of the Winds in ancient Athens, part of the frieze depicting the Greek wind gods Boreas (north wind, on the left) and Skiron (northwesterly wind, on the right)

Notus



Notus, a Rococo sculpture, Palace of the Four Winds in Warsaw.

Notus (Greek Νότος, *Nótos*) was the Greek god of the south wind. He was associated with the desiccating hot wind of the rise of Sirius after midsummer, was thought to bring the storms of late summer and autumn, and was feared as a destroyer of crops.

Auster

Notus' equivalent in Roman mythology was **Auster**, the embodiment of the sirocco wind, who brought heavy cloud cover and fog or humidity. The Auster winds are mentioned in Vergil's *Aeneid* Book II, lines 304-307: "*in segetem veluti cum flamma furentibus Austris incidit, aut rapidus montano flumine torrens sternit agros, sternit sata laeta boumque labores, praecipitesque trahit silvas*"

Eurus

Eurus (Greek: Εὔρος, *Eúros*) was the Greek deity representing the unlucky east wind. He was thought to bring warmth and rain, and his symbol was an inverted vase, spilling water. His Roman counterpart was **Vulturnus** (not to be confused with Volturnus, a tribal river-god who later became a Roman deity of the River Tiber).

Zephyrus

Zephyrus, or just **Zephyr** (Greek: Ζέφυρος, *Zéphuros*, "the west wind"), in Latin Favonius, is the Greek god of the west wind. The gentlest of the winds, Zephyrus is known as the fructifying wind, the messenger of spring. It was thought that Zephyrus lived in a cave in Thrace.

Zephyrus was reported as having several wives in different stories. He was said to be the husband of his sister Iris, the goddess of the rainbow. He abducted another of his sisters, the goddess Chloris, and gave her the domain of flowers. With Chloris, he fathered Carpus ("fruit"). He is said to have vied for Chloris's love with his brother Boreas, eventually winning her devotion. Additionally, with yet another sister and lover, the harpy Podarge (also known as Celaeno), Zephyrus was said to be the father of Balios and Xanthus, Achilles' horses.

One of the surviving myths in which Zephyrus features most prominently is that of Hyacinth. Hyacinth was a very handsome and athletic Spartan prince. Zephyrus fell in love with him and courted him, and so did Apollo. The two competed for the boy's love, but he chose Apollo, driving Zephyrus mad with jealousy. Later, catching Apollo and Hyacinth throwing a discus, Zephyrus blew a gust of wind at them, striking the boy in the head with the falling discus. When Hyacinth died, Apollo created the hyacinth flower from his blood.^{hyacinth}

In the story of Cupid and Psyche, Zephyrus served Eros (or Cupid) by transporting Psyche to his cave.

Favonius

Zephyrus' Roman equivalent was **Favonius**, who held dominion over plants and flowers. The name *Favonius*, which meant "favorable", was also a common Roman name.

Minor winds

Four lesser wind deities appear in a few ancient sources, such as at the Tower of the Winds in Athens. Originally, as attested in Hesiod and Homer, these four minor Anemoi were the **Anemoi Thuellai** (Ἄνεμοι Θύελλαι; Greek: "Tempest-Winds"), wicked and violent daemons (spirits) created by the monster Typhon, and male counterparts to the harpies, who were also called *thuellai*. These were the winds held in Aeolus's stables; the other four, "heavenly" Anemoi were not kept locked up. However, later writers confused and conflated the two groups of Anemoi, and the distinction was largely forgotten.

Kaikias was the Greek deity of the northeast wind. He is shown as a bearded man with a shield full of hail-stones, and his name is cognate to the Latin word *caecus* "blind", that is, he was seen as a "dark" wind. The Roman spelling of Kaikias was **Caecius**.



Zephyrus, the Greek god of the west wind and the goddess Chloris, from an 1875 engraving by William-Adolphe Bouguereau



Zephyrus and Hyacinth; Attic red-figure cup from Tarquinia, ca 480 BC, Boston Museum of Fine Arts

Apeliotes, sometimes known to the Romans as **Apeliotus**, was the Greek deity of the southeast wind. As this wind was thought to cause a refreshing rain particularly beneficial to farmers, he is often depicted wearing gumboots and carrying fruit, draped in a light cloth concealing some flowers or grain. He is cleanshaven, with curly hair and a friendly expression. Because Apeliotes was a minor god, he was often synthesized with Eurus, the east wind. **Subsolanus**, Apeliotes' Roman counterpart, was also sometimes considered the east wind, in Vulturinus' place.

Skiron, or **Skeiron**, was the Greek god of the northwest wind. His name is related to *Skirophorion*, the last of the three months of spring in the Attic festival calendar. He is depicted as a bearded man tilting a cauldron, representing the onset of winter. His Roman counterpart is **Caurus**, or **Corus**. Corus was also one of the oldest Roman wind-deities, and numbered among the *di indigetes* ("indigenous gods"), a group of abstract and largely minor numinous entities.

Lips was the Greek deity of the southwest wind, often depicted holding the stern of a ship. His Roman equivalent was **Afer ventus** ("African wind"), or **Africus**, due to Africa being to the southwest of Italy. This name is thought to be derived from the name of a North African tribe, the *Afri*.

Other minor wind deities included:

- **Argestes** "clearing", a wind blowing from about the same direction as Skiron (Caurus), and probably another name for it
- **Aparctias**, sometimes called the north wind instead of Boreas (Septentrionarius)
- **Circius** or **Thrascius**, the north-north-west wind
- **Euronotus**, the wind blowing from the direction, as its very name suggests, between Euros and Notos, that is, a south-south-east wind (**Euroauster** to the Romans)
- **Iapyx**, the north-west wind about the same as Caurus
- **Libonotus**, the south-south-west wind, known as **Austro-Africus** to the Romans
- **Meses**, another name for the north-west wind
- **Olympias**, apparently identified with Skiron/Argestes
- **Phoenicias**, another name for the south-east wind ("the one blowing from Phoenicia", due to this land lying to the south-east of Greece)

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Centaur

Centaur

AKA: Kentaur, Κένταυρος, Centaurus



A bronze statue of a centaur, after the *Furietti Centaurs*.

Mythology	Greek
Grouping	Legendary creature
Sub-grouping	Hybrid
Region	Greece
Habitat	Land
Similar creatures	Minotaur, satyr, harpy

In Greek mythology, a **centaur** (from Ancient Greek: Κένταυρος, *Kéntauros*) or **hippocentaur**^{[1][2][3]} is a member of a composite race of creatures, part human and part horse. In early Attic and Boeotian vase-paintings (see below), they are depicted with the hindquarters of a horse attached to them; in later renderings centaurs are given the torso of a human joined at the waist to the horse's withers, where the horse's neck would be.

This half-human and half-animal composition has led many writers to treat them as liminal beings, caught between the two natures, embodied in contrasted myths, both as the embodiment of untamed nature, as in their battle with the Lapiths, or conversely as teachers, like Chiron.

The centaurs were usually said to have been born of Ixion and Nephele (the cloud made in the image of Hera). Another version, however, makes them children of a certain Centaurus, who mated with the Magnesian mares. This Centaurus was either himself the son of Ixion and Nephele (inserting an additional generation) or of Apollo and Stilbe, daughter of the river god Peneus. In the later version of the story his twin brother was Lapithes, ancestor of the Lapiths, thus making the two warring peoples cousins.

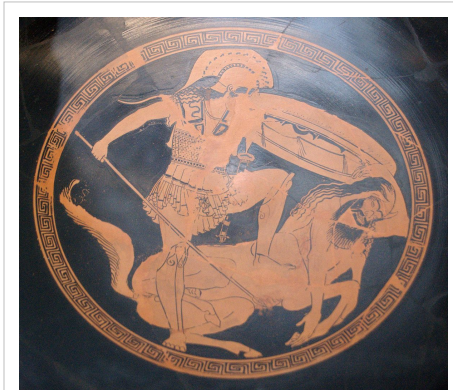
Centaurs were said to have inhabited the region of Magnesia and Mount Pelion in Thessaly, the Foloi oak forest in Elis, and the Malean peninsula in southern Laconia.

Centaurs continued to figure in literary forms of Roman mythology. A pair of them draw the chariot of Constantine the Great and his family in the Great Cameo of Constantine (c314-16), which embodies wholly pagan imagery.^[4]

Centauiromachy

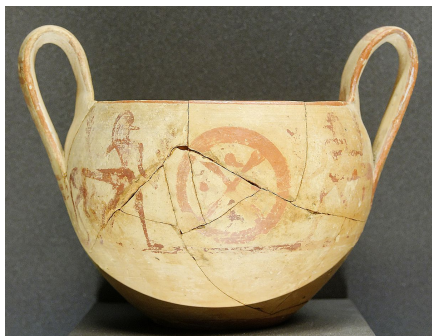
The Centaurs are best known for their fight with the Lapiths, caused by their attempt to carry off Hippodamia and the rest of the Lapith women, on the day of her marriage to Pirithous, king of the Lapithae, himself the son of Ixion. The strife among these cousins is a metaphor for the conflict between the lower appetites and civilized behavior in humankind. Theseus, a hero and founder of cities, who happened to be present, threw the balance in favour of the right order of things, and assisted Pirithous. The Centaurs were driven off or destroyed.^{[5][6][7]} Another Lapith hero, Caeneus, who was invulnerable to weapons, was beaten into the earth by Centaurs wielding rocks and the branches of trees. Centaurs are thought of in many Greek myths as wild as untamed horses. Like the Titanomachy, the defeat of the Titans by the Olympian gods, the contests with the Centaurs typify the struggle between civilization and barbarism.

The Centauiromachy is most famously portrayed in the Parthenon metopes by Phidias and in a Renaissance-era sculpture by Michelangelo.



Centauiromachy, tondo of an Attic red-figure kylix, ca. 480 BC

Earliest representations



Boeotian *kantharos*, Late Geometric period

The tentative identification of two fragmentary Mycenaean terracotta figures as centaurs, among the extensive Mycenaean pottery found at Ugarit, suggests a Bronze Age origin for these creatures of myth.^[8] A painted terracotta centaur was found in the "Hero's tomb" at Lefkandi, and by the Geometric period, centaurs figure among the first representational figures painted on Greek pottery. An often-published Geometric period bronze of a warrior face-to-face with a centaur is at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.^[9]

Theories of origin

The most common theory holds that the idea of centaurs came from the first reaction of a non-riding culture, as in the Minoan Aegean world, to nomads who were mounted on horses. The theory suggests that such riders would appear as half-man, half-animal (Bernal Díaz del Castillo reported that the Aztecs had this misapprehension about Spanish cavalrymen).^[10] Horse taming and horseback culture arose first in the southern steppe grasslands of Central Asia, perhaps approximately in modern Kazakhstan.

The Lapith tribe of Thessaly, who were the kinsmen of the Centaurs in myth, were described as the inventors of horse-back riding by Greek writers. The Thessalian tribes also claimed their horse breeds were descended from the centaurs.

Of the various Classical Greek authors who mentioned centaurs, Pindar was the first who describes undoubtedly a combined monster.^[11] Previous authors (Homer) only use words such as *pheres* (cf. *theres*, "beasts")^[12] that could also mean ordinary savage men riding ordinary horses. However, contemporaneous representations of hybrid centaurs can be found in archaic Greek art.

Lucretius in his first century BC philosophical poem *On the Nature of Things* denied the existence of centaurs based on their differing rate of growth. He states that at three years old horses are in the prime of their life while at three humans are still little more than babies, making hybrid animals impossible.^[13]

Robert Graves (relying on the work of Georges Dumezil^[14] argued for tracing the centaurs back to the Indian *gandharva*), speculated that the centaurs were a dimly remembered, pre-Hellenic fraternal earth cult who had the horse as a totem.^[15] A similar theory was incorporated into Mary Renault's *The Bull from the Sea*. Kinnaras, another half-man half-horse mythical creature from the Indian mythology, appeared in various ancient texts, arts as well as sculptures from all around India. It is shown as a horse with the torso of a man in place of where the horse's head has to be, that is similar to a Greek centaur.^{[16][17]}

The Greek word *kentauros* is generally regarded as of obscure origin.^[18] The etymology from *ken* – *tauros*, "piercing bull-stickers" was a Euhemerist suggestion in Palaephatus' rationalizing text on Greek mythology, *On Incredible Tales* (Περὶ ἀπίστων): mounted archers from a village called *Nephele* eliminating a herd of bulls that were the scourge of Ixion's kingdom.^[19] Another possible related etymology can be "bull-slayer".^[20] Some say that the Greeks took the constellation of Centaurus, and also its name "piercing bull", from Mesopotamia, where it symbolized the god Baal who represents rain and fertility, fighting with and *piercing* with his horns the demon Mot who represents the summer drought. In Greece, the constellation of Centaurus was noted by Eudoxus of Cnidus in the fourth century BC and by Aratus in the third century.

Female centaurs

Though female centaurs, called *Kentaurides*, are not mentioned in early Greek literature and art, they do appear occasionally in later antiquity. A Macedonian mosaic of the 4th century BC^[21] is one of the earliest examples of the Centauress in art. Ovid^[22] also mentions a centauress named Hylonome who committed suicide when her husband Cyllarus was killed in the war with the Lapiths.

In a description of a painting in Neapolis, the Greek rhetorician Philostratus the Elder describes them as sisters and wives of the male centaurs who live on Mount Pelion with their children.

"How beautiful the Centaurides are, even where they are horses; for some grow out of white mares, others are attached to chestnut mares, and the coats of others are dappled, but they glisten like those of horses that are well cared for. There is also a white female Centaur that grows out of a black mare, and the very opposition of the colours helps to produce the united beauty of the whole."^[23]



Centaur carrying off a nymph (1892) by Laurent Marqueste (Tuileries Garden, Paris)



Female centaurs flanking Venus (Mosaic from Roman Tunisia, 2nd century AD)

The idea, or possibility, of female centaurs was certainly known in early modern times, as evidenced by Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Act IV, Scene vi, ln.124–125: "Down from the waist they're centaurs, / Though women all above"

In the Disney animated film *Fantasia*, during the Pastoral Symphony, some of the main characters are female centaurs. However, the Disney studio called them "Centaurettes" instead of Kentaurides.

Persistence in the medieval world

Centaurs preserved a Dionysian connection in the 12th century Romanesque carved capitals of Mozac Abbey in the Auvergne, where other capitals depict harvesters, boys riding goats (a further Dionysiac theme) and griffins guarding the chalice that held the wine.

Centaurs are shown on a number of Pictish carved stones from north-east Scotland, erected in the 8th–9th centuries AD (e.g., at Meigle, Perthshire). Though outside the limits of the Roman Empire, these depictions appear to be derived from Classical prototypes.

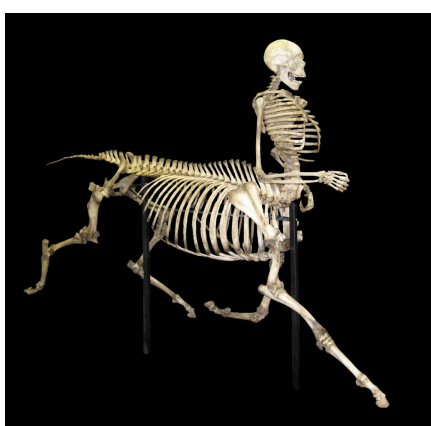
Jerome's version of the *Life* of St Anthony the Great, the hermit monk of Egypt, written by Athanasius of Alexandria, was widely disseminated in the Middle Ages; it relates Anthony's encounter with a centaur, who challenged the saint but was forced to admit that the old gods had been overthrown. The episode was often depicted; notably, in the *The Meeting of St Anthony Abbot and St Paul the Hermit* by Stefano di Giovanni called "Sassetta",^[24] of two episodic depictions in a single panel of the hermit Anthony's travel to greet the hermit Paul, one is his encounter along the pathway with the demonic figure of a centaur in a wood.

A centaur-like half-human half-equine creature called *Polkan* appeared in Russian folk art, and lubok prints of the 17th–19th centuries. Polkan is originally based on *Pulicane*, a half-dog from Andrea da Barberino's poem *I Reali di Francia*, which was once popular in the Slavonic world in prosaic translations.



Centaurs harvest grapes on a 12th-century capital from the Mozac Abbey in the Auvergne

Modern day



Centaur skeleton of human and equine bone, on display at the International Wildlife Museum in Tucson, part of an art installation by sculptor Bill Willers. Built by Skulls Unlimited International, Inc.

The John C. Hodges library at The University of Tennessee hosts a permanent exhibit of a "Centaur from Volos", in its library. The exhibit, made by sculptor Bill Willers, by combining a study human skeleton with the skeleton of a Shetland pony is entitled "Do you believe in Centaurs?" and was meant to mislead students in order to make them more critically aware, according to the exhibitors.^[25]

Another exhibit by Willers is now on long term display at the International Wildlife Museum in Tucson, Arizona. The full-mount skeleton of a Centaur, built by Skulls Unlimited International, is on display, along with several other fabled creatures, including the Cyclops, Unicorn and Griffin.

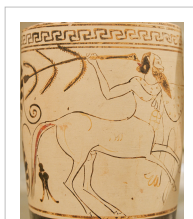
A centaur is one of the symbols associated with both the Iota Phi Theta and the Delta Lambda Phi fraternities. Whereas centaurs in Greek mythology were generally symbolic of chaos and unbridled passions, Delta Lambda Phi's centaur is modeled after Chiron and represents honor, moderation and tempered masculinity.

Similarly, C.S. Lewis' centaurs from his popular *The Chronicles of Narnia* series are depicted as wisest and noblest of creatures. They are gifted at stargazing, prophecy, healing, and warfare, a fierce and valiant race always faithful to the High King Aslan the Lion. Lewis generally used the species to inspire awe in his readers (see Narnian Centaurs). In J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, centaurs live in the Forbidden Forest close to Hogwarts. Although different from those seen in Narnia, they live in societies called herds and are skilled at archery, healing and astrology. Although film depictions include very animalistic facial features, the reaction of the Hogwarts girls to Firenze suggests a more classical appearance. With the exception of Chiron, the centaurs in Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* series are different from both the Narnian and Potter centaurs. They are seen as party-goers who use a lot of American slang. Chiron is more like the classical centaurs, being trainer of the heroes and skilled in archery. In Riordan's subsequent series, *Heroes of Olympus*, centaurs are depicted with more animalistic features (horns) and appear as villains, serving the Gigantes.

Philip Jose Farmer's *World of Tiers* series (1965) includes centaurs, called Half-Horses or Hoi Kentauroi. His creations address several of the metabolic problems of such creatures—how could the human mouth and nose intake sufficient air to sustain both itself and the horse body and, similarly, how could the human ingest sufficient food to sustain both parts.

Brandon Mull's *Fablehaven* series features Centaurs that live in an area called Grunhold. The Centaurs are portrayed as a proud, elitist group of beings that consider themselves superior to all other creatures. The fourth book also has a variation on the species called an Alcetaur, which is part man, part moose.

Gallery



Diosphos Painter,
white-ground
lekythos (500 BC)



Botticelli,
*Pallas and
Centaur*
(1482-83)



Antonio Canova, *Theseus
Defeats the Centaur*
(1805-1819)



Prince Bova fights Polkan,
Russian lubok (1860)

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- [1] thefreedictionary.com (<http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Hippocentaur>)
- [2] dictionary.reference.com (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Hippocentaur>)
- [3] definitions.net (<http://www.definitions.net/definition/hippocentaur>)
- [4] The Great Cameo of Constantine, formerly in the collection of Peter Paul Rubens and now in the Geld en Bankmuseum, Utrecht, is illustrated, for instance, in Paul Stephenson, *Constantine, Roman Emperor, Christian Victor*, 2010:fig. 53.
- [5] Plutarch, *Theseus*, 30.
- [6] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* xii. 210.
- [7] Diodorus Siculusiv. pp. 69-70.
- [8] Ione Mylonas Shear, "Mycenaean Centaurs at Ugarit" *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* **122** (2002:147–153); but see the interpretation relating them to "abbreviated group" figures at the Bronze-Age sanctuary of Aphaia and elsewhere, presented by Korinna Pilafidis-Williams, "No Mycenaean Centaurs Yet", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* **124** (2004), p. 165, which concludes "we had perhaps do best not to raise hopes of a continuity of images across the divide between the Bronze Age and the historical period."
- [9] Metropolitan Museum of Art (<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/17.190.2072>) Retrieved 9 October 2011.
- [10] Stuart Chase, *Mexico: A Study of Two Americas*, Chapter IV (University of Virginia Hypertext (<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper2/chase/ch04.html>)). Retrieved 24 April 2006.
- [11] "...that strange race was born, like to both parents, their mother's form below, above their sire's." (*Second Pythian Ode*).
- [12] For example, Homer *Iliad* i. 268, ii. 743. Compare the Hesiodic *Shield of Heracles*, 104.

- [13] Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, book V, translated by William Ellery Leonard, 1916 (The Perseus Project (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Lucr.+5.878>).) Retrieved 27 July 2008.
- [14] Dumezil, *Le Probleme des Centaures* (Paris 1929) and *Mitra-Varuna: An essay on two Indo-European representations of sovereignty* (1948. tr. 1988).
- [15] Graves, *The Greek Myths*, 1960 § 81.4; § 102 "Centaurs"; § 126.3;.
- [16] Devdutt Pattanaik, "Indian mythology : tales, symbols, and rituals from the heart of the Subcontinent" (Rochester, USA 2003) P.74: ISBN 0-89281-870-0.
- [17] K. Krishna Murthy, *Mythical Animals in Indian Art* (New Delhi, India 1985).
- [18] Alex Scobie, "The Origins of 'Centaurs'" *Folklore* **89.2** (1978:142–147); Scobie quotes Martin P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, 1955, "Die Etymologie und die Deutung der Ursprungs sind unsicher und mögen auf sich beruhen".
- [19] Noted by Scobie 1978:142.
- [20] Alexander Hislop, in his polemic *The Two Babylons: Papal Worship Revealed to be the Worship of Nimrod and His Wife*. (1853, revised 1858) theorized that the word is derived from the Semitic Kohen and "tor" (to go round) via phonetic shift the less prominent consonants being lost over time, with it developing into **Khen Tor** or *Ken-Tor*, and being transliterated phonetically into Ionian as *Kentaur*, but this is not accepted by any modern philologist.
- [21] Pella Archaeological Museum.
- [22] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 12. 210 ff., the name Hylomene is Greek so Ovid may have drawn her story from an earlier Greek writer.
- [23] Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines* 2. 3.
- [24] National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC: illustration (<http://www.wga.hu/support/viewer/z.html>).
- [25] Anderson, Maggie (August 26 2004). *Library hails centaur's 10th anniversary* (<http://notes.utk.edu/bio/unistudy.nsf/0/22d591ecc61a2cca85256efd00631d45?OpenDocument>). **97**. . Retrieved 2006-09-21.


Further reading

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- Harry Potter, books 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.
- The Chronicles of Narnia, book 2.
- The Lightning Thief, book 1.
- Frédérick S. Parker. *Finding the Kingdom of the Centaurs*.

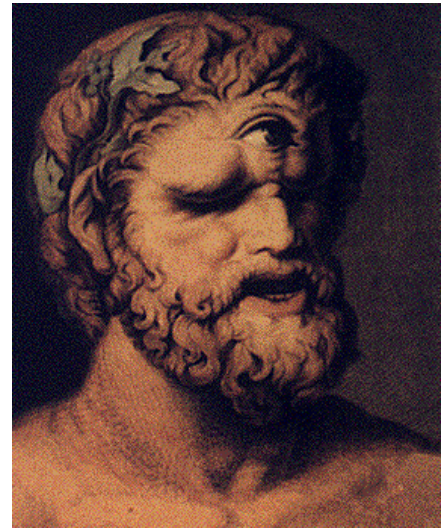
External links

- Theoi Project on Centaurs (<http://www.theoi.com/Georgikos/KentauroiThessalioi.html>) in literature
- Centaurides (<http://theoi.com/Georgikos/Kentaurides.html>) on female centaurs
- MythWeb (<http://www.mythweb.com/encyc/entries/centaurs.html>) article on centaurs
- Harry Potter Lexicon (http://www.hp-lexicon.org/bestiary/bestiary_c.html#centaurs) article on centaurs in the Harry Potter universe
- Erich Kissing's centaurs (<http://www.erich-kissing.de/kentaure.htm>) contemporary art

Cyclops

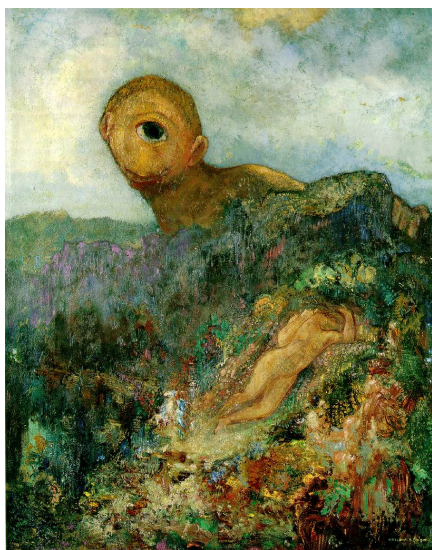
A **cyclops** ( /ˈsaɪkloʊps/; Greek: Κύκλωψ, *Kyklōps*; plural **cyclopes** /saɪˈkloʊpiːz/; Greek: Κύκλωπες, *Kyklōpes*), in Greek mythology and later Roman mythology, was a member of a primordial race of giants, each with a single eye in the middle of his forehead.^[1] The name is widely thought to mean "circle-eyed".^[2]

Hesiod described one group of cyclopes and the epic poet Homer described another, though other accounts have also been written by the playwright Euripides, poet Theocritus and Roman epic poet Virgil. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, Zeus releases three Cyclopes, the sons of Uranus and Gaia, from the dark pit of Tartarus. They provide Zeus' thunderbolt, Hades' helmet of invisibility, and Poseidon's trident, and the gods use these weapons to defeat the Titans. In a famous episode of Homer's *Odyssey*, the hero Odysseus encounters the Cyclops Polyphemus, the son of Poseidon and Thoosa (a nereid), who lives with his fellow Cyclopes in a distant country. The connection between the two groups has been debated in antiquity and by modern scholars.^[3] It is upon Homer's account that Euripides and Virgil based their accounts of the mythical creatures.



Polyphemus, by Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein, 1802 (Landesmuseum Oldenburg)

Mythology and literature



The Cyclops, gouache and oil by Odilon Redon, undated (Kröller-Müller Museum)^[4]

Various ancient Greek and Roman authors wrote about the cyclopes. Hesiod described them as three brothers who were primordial giants. All the other sources of literature about the cyclopes describe the cyclops Polyphemus, who lived upon an island populated by the creatures.

Hesiod

In the *Theogony* by Hesiod, the Cyclopes – Brontes ("thunderer"), Steropes ("lightning") and the "bright" Arges (Greek: Ἄργης, Βρόντης, and Στερότης) – were the primordial sons of Uranus (Sky) and Gaia (Earth) and brothers of the Hecatonchires. As such, they were blood-related to the Titan and Olympian gods and goddesses.^[5] They were giants with a single eye in the middle of their forehead and a foul disposition. According to Hesiod, they were strong, stubborn, and "abrupt of emotion". Collectively they eventually became synonyms for brute strength and power, and their name was invoked in connection with massive masonry. They were often pictured at their

forge.

Uranus, fearing their strength, locked them in Tartarus. Cronus, another son of Uranus and Gaia, later freed the Cyclopes, along with the Hecatonchires, after he had overthrown Uranus. Cronus then placed them back in Tartarus, where they remained, guarded by the female dragon Campe, until freed by Zeus. They fashioned thunderbolts for Zeus to use as weapons, and helped him overthrow Cronus and the other Titans. The lightning bolts, which became Zeus's main weapons, were forged by all three Cyclopes, in that Arges added brightness, Brontes added thunder, and

Steropes added lightning.

These Cyclopes also created Poseidon's trident, Artemis's bow and arrows of moonlight, Apollo's bow and arrows of sun rays, and Hades's helmet of darkness that was given to Perseus on his quest to kill Medusa.

Callimachus

According to a hymn of Callimachus,^[6] they were Hephaestus' helpers at the forge. The Cyclopes were said to have built the "cyclopean" fortifications at Tiryns and Mycenae in the Peloponnese. The noises proceeding from the heart of volcanoes were attributed to their operations.

Euripides

According to *Alceste* by Euripides, Apollo killed the Cyclopes, in retaliation for Asclepius's murder at the hands of Zeus. Apollo was then forced into the servitude of Admetus for one year. Zeus later returned Asclepius and the Cyclopes from Hades.

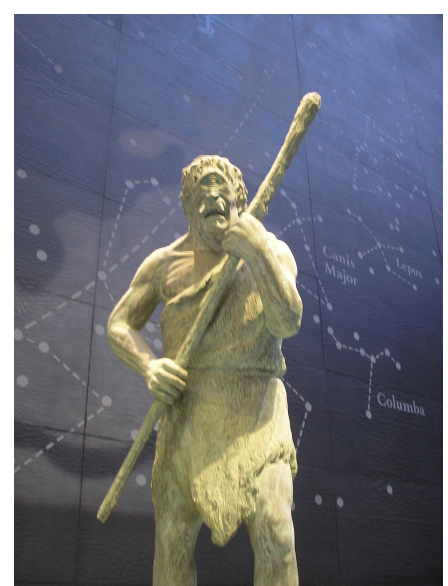
Theocritus

The Sicilian Greek poet Theocritus wrote two poems circa 275 BC concerning Polyphemus' desire for Galatea, a sea nymph. When Galatea instead married Acis, a Sicilian mortal, a jealous Polyphemus killed him with a boulder. Galatea turned Acis' blood into a river of the same name in Sicily.

Virgil

Virgil, the Roman epic poet, wrote, in book three of *The Aeneid*, of how Aeneas and his crew landed on the island of the cyclops after escaping from Troy at the end of the Trojan War. Aeneas and his crew land on the island, when they are approached by a desperate Greek man from Ithaca, Achaemenides, who was stranded on the island a few years previously with Odysseus' expedition (as depicted in *The Odyssey*).

Virgil's account acts as a sequel to Homer's, with the fate of Polyphemus as a blind cyclops after the escape of Odysseus and his crew.



Statue of a Cyclops at the Natural History Museum in London

Origins



Skull of a dwarf elephant displayed in the zoo of Munich, Germany.

Walter Burkert among others suggests that the archaic groups or societies of lesser gods mirror real cult associations: "It may be surmised that smith guilds lie behind Cabeiri, Idaian Dactyloi, Telchines, and Cyclopes."^[7] Given their penchant for blacksmithing, many scholars believe the legend of the Cyclopes' single eye arose from an actual practice of blacksmiths wearing an eyepatch over one eye to prevent flying sparks from blinding them in both eyes. The Cyclopes seen in Homer's *Odyssey* are of a different type from those in the *Theogony* and they have no connection to blacksmithing. It is possible that independent legends associated with Polyphemus did not make him a Cyclops before Homer's *Odyssey*; Polyphemus may have been some sort of local daemon or monster in original stories.

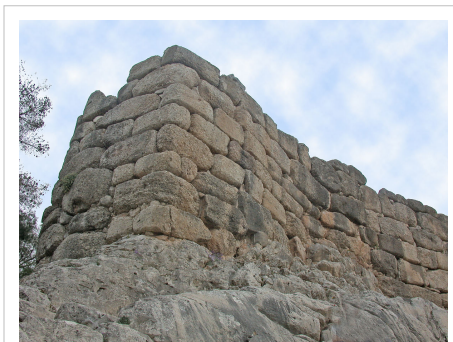
Another possible origin for the Cyclops legend, advanced by the paleontologist Othenio Abel in 1914,^[8] is the prehistoric dwarf elephant skulls – about twice the size of a human skull – that may have been found by the Greeks on Cyprus, Crete, Malta and Sicily. Abel suggested that the large, central nasal cavity (for the trunk) in the skull

might have been interpreted as a large single eye-socket.^[9] Given the inexperience of the locals with living elephants, they were unlikely to recognize the skull for what it actually was.^[10]

Veratrum album, or white hellebore, an herbal medicine described by Hippocrates before 400 BC,^[11] contains the alkaloids cyclopamine and jervine, which are teratogens capable of causing cyclopia and holoprosencephaly. Students of teratology have raised the possibility of a link between this developmental deformity in infants and the myth for which it was named.^[12] Regardless of the connection between the herb and the birth abnormalities, it is possible these rare birth defects may have contributed to the myth.

Cyclopean walls

After the "Dark Age", when Hellenes looked with awe at the vast dressed blocks, known as Cyclopean structures, which had been used in Mycenaean masonry (at sites such as Mycenae and Tiryns or on Cyprus), they concluded that only the Cyclopes had the combination of skill and strength to build in such a monumental manner.



Cyclopean walls at Mycenae.

Notes

- [1] Female cyclopes are not stated in any classical sources.
- [2] As with many Greek mythic names, however, this might be a folk etymology. Another proposal holds that the word is derived from PIE *pku-klōps* "sheep thief". See: Paul Thieme, "Etymologische Vexierbilder", *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung* 69 (1951): 177-78; Burkert (1982), p. 157; J.P.S. Beekes, Indo-European Etymological Project, s.v. Cyclops. (<http://www.indo-european.nl/cgi-bin/response.cgi?root=leiden&morpho=0&basename=\data\ie\greek&first=111>) Note that this would mean that the Cyclopes were regular giants, and the depictions with a singular eye, secondarily motivated by the folk etymology.
- [3] Mondi, pp. 17-18: "Why is there such a discrepancy between the nature of the Homeric Cyclopes and the nature of those found in Hesiod's *Theogony*? Ancient commentators were so exercised by this problem that they supposed there to be more than one type of Cyclops, and we must agree that, on the surface at least, these two groups could hardly have less in common."
- [4] Dated before 1905, possibly a replica of a pastel, according to Klaus Berger, "The Pastels of Odilon Redon", *College Art Journal* 16.1 (Autumn 1956:23-33) p. 30f; dated 1898-1900 by David H. Porter, "Metamorphoses and Metamorphosis: A Brief Response", *American*

Journal of Philology **124.3** (Fall 2003:473-76); illus. in Sven Sandström, *Le Monde imaginaire d'Odilon Redon: étude iconologique*, 1955:69.

- [5] Hesiod, *Theogony* 139 ff. (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0130:card=139>). Arges was elsewhere called Acmonides (Ovid, *Fasti* iv. 288), or Pyraemon (Virgil, *Aeneid* viii. 425).
- [6] *To Artemis*, 46f. See also Virgil's *Georgics* 4.173 and *Aeneid* 8.416ff.
- [7] Burkert (1991), p. 173.
- [8] Abel's surmise is noted by Adrienne Mayor, *The First Fossil Hunters: Paleontology in Greek and Roman Times* (Princeton University Press) 2000.
- [9] The smaller, actual eye-sockets are on the sides and, being very shallow, were hardly noticeable as such
- [10] "Meet the original Cyclops" (<http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~loxias/cyclops02.htm>). Retrieved 18 May 2007.
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- [12] Armand Marie Leroi, *Mutants: On the Form, Varieties and Errors of the Human Body*, 2005:68.

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- Perseus Encyclopedia: Cyclopes (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0004&layout=&loc=Cyclopes>)
- Theoi.com: Cyclopes (<http://www.theoi.com/Titan/Kyklopes.html>)

Gigantes

In Greek mythology, the **Giants** were the children of Gaia, who was fertilized by the blood of Uranus, after Uranus was castrated by his son Cronus.^[1] Some depictions stated that these Giants had snake-like tails.



Gigantomachia: Dionysos attacking a Giant, Attic red-figure *pelike*, c. 460 BC, Louvre.

Gigantomachy



Poseidon and Giant.

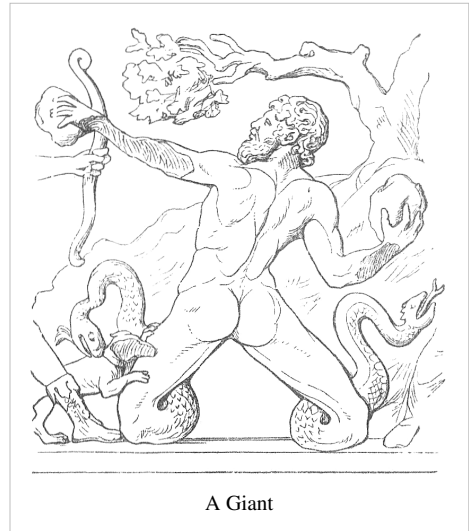
Gaia, incensed by the imprisonment of the Titans in Tartarus by the Olympians, incited the Giants to rise up in arms against them, end their reign, and restore the Titans' rule. Led on by Alcyoneus, and Porphyryon, they tested the strength of the Olympians in what is known as the *Gigantomachia* or Gigantomachy. The Giants Otus and Ephialtes hoped to reach the top of Mount Olympus by stacking the mountain ranges of Thessaly, Pelion, and Ossa on top of each other.

The Olympians called upon the aid of Heracles after a prophecy warned them that he was required to defeat the Giants, for the aid of a mortal was needed.^[2] Athena, instructed by Zeus, sought out Heracles and requested his participation in the battle. Heracles responded to Athena's request by shooting an arrow dipped in the poisonous blood of the dreaded Hydra at Alcyoneus, which made the Giant fall to the

earth. However, the Giant was immortal so long as he remained in Pallene. Athena advised Heracles to drag Alcyoneus outside Pallene to make the Giant susceptible to death. Once outside Pallene, he was beaten to death by Heracles. Heracles slew not only Alcyoneus, but dealt the death blow to the Giants who had been wounded by the Olympians. The Giants who died by the hero's hands were Alcyoneus, Ephialtes, Leon, Peloreus, Porphyryon and Theodamas, giving Heracles the most kills of the Gigantomachy.^[3]

The Olympians fought the Giants with the Moirai aiding them before the aforementioned prophecy was made, meaning the Giants would have overcome the combined efforts of both Olympus and the Sisters of Fate had Heracles not fought.

This battle occurred in the time when Heracles lived, so many events had already happened: the establishment of the Olympian gods, their progeny, the adventures of Perseus (forefather of Heracles) and so on. Thus in the Gigantomachy, the Moirai and Heracles, having joined the Olympians, defeated the Giants and quelled the rebellion, confirming their reign over the earth, sea, and heaven, and confining the Giants into Tartarus. The only Giant not slain in the conflict was Aristaios, who was turned into a dung beetle by Gaia so the Giant might be safe from the wrath of the Olympians.^[4]



A Giant



In the Gigantomachy from a 1st century AD frieze in the agora of Aphrodisias, the Giants are depicted with scaly coils, like Typhon

Whether the Gigantomachy was interpreted in ancient times as a kind of indirect "revenge of the Titans" upon the Olympians—as the Giants' reign would have been in some fashion a restoration of the age of the Titans—is not attested in any of the few literary references. Later Hellenistic poets and Latin ones tended to blur Titans and Giants.^[5]

According to the Greeks, the Giants were buried by the gods beneath the earth, where their writhing caused volcanic activity and earthquakes.

In iconic representations the Gigantomachy was a favorite theme of the Greek vase-painters of the 5th century BC.

More impressive depictions of the Gigantomachy can be found in classical sculptural relief, such as the great altar of Pergamon, where

the serpent-legged giants are locked in battle with a host of gods, or in Antiquity at the Temple of Olympian Zeus at Acragas.^[6]

The names of the Giants

Some of the Giants identified by individual names were:

- Eurymedon: Mentioned by Homer^[7] as a king of the Giants.
- Alcyoneus: One of the strongest of the Giants, along with Porphyrion. Slain by his own grandnephew, Heracles.
- Porphyrion: One of the strongest of the Giants, along with Alcyoneus. Referred to by Pindar as king of the Giants.^[8] Wounded by his nephew Zeus with lightning bolts and finished off with an arrow by his grandnephew Heracles.
- Agrios: Clubbed to death by his three nieces/grandnieces, the Moirai, with clubs of bronze.
- Clytius: Immolated by his niece Hecate with flaming torches.^[9]
- Damysos
- Enceladus: Killed by his grandniece, Athena, and buried underneath Mount Etna, like Typhon, on Sicily.
- Ephialtes of the Aloadae: Shot by grandnephews Apollo and Heracles with arrows, or inadvertently killed by Otus.
- Eurytus: Slain by grandnephew Dionysus with his pine-cone tipped thyrsos.
- Gratiō: Slain by his grandniece, the goddess Artemis with her arrows.
- Hippolytus: Slain by his grandnephew Hermes with his sword and wearing the cap of invisibility.
- Leon: the lion headed giant slain by Herakles in the giants war
- Mimas: Slain by grandnephew Hephaestus with a volley of molten iron, or slain by Ares and robbed of his armor.^[10]
- Otus of the Aloadae: Shot by grandnephews Apollo and Heracles with arrows, or inadvertently killed by Ephialtes.
- Pallas: Killed by grandniece Athena.
- Pelorus: Slain by the Olympian Ares.^[11]
- Polybotes: Crushed by nephew Poseidon beneath the island of Nisyros.
- Theodamas
- Thoon: Clubbed to death, like Agrios, by his three nieces/grandnieces, the Moirai, with clubs of bronze.



Fountain of the Giants in the gardens of Versailles.

References

- [1] A parallel to the Giants' birth is the birth of Aphrodite from the similarly fertilized sea.
- [2] Apollodorus, Library
- [3] <http://www.theoi.com/Gigante/Gigantes.html>
- [4] <http://www.theoi.com/Gigante/Gigantes.html>
- [5] In a surviving fragment of Naevius' poem on the Punic war, he describes the Giants Runcus and Purpureus (Porphyrion):

Inerant signa expressa, quo modo Titani

bicorpores Gigantes, magnique Atlantes

Runcus ac Purpureus filii Terras.

Eduard Fraenkel remarks of these lines, with their highly unusual plural *Atlantes*, "It does not surprise us to find the names *Titani* and *Gigantes* employed indiscriminately to denote the same mythological creatures, for we are used to the identification, or confusion, of these two types of monsters which, though not original, had probably become fairly common by the time of Naevius". (Fraenkel, "The Giants in the Poem of Naevius" *The Journal of Roman Studies* 44 (1954, pp. 14-17) p. 15 and note.

- [6] A repertory of the theme in Greek arts is offered in Francis Vian, *Répertoire des gigantomachie figurées* (Paris) 1951 and his *La Guerre des Géants* (Paris) 1952.

- [7] *Odyssey* 7.54 ff. (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?jsessionid=80812DE568DAE1DF9DA706CD958F9A81?doc=Hom.+Od.+7.54&fromdoc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0136>).
- [8] Pindar, *Pythian* 8 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0162:book=P.:poem=8&highlight=porphyryon>).
- [9] *Bibliotheca* 1. 6. 2
- [10] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* III.1226–1227
- [11] Claudian, *Gigantomachy* 73–82 (<http://www.theoi.com/Text/ClaudianGigantomachy.html>).

Sources

- The Gigantes in Classical Literature and Art (<http://www.theoi.com/Gigante/Gigantes.html>)
- Burkert, Walter. *Greek Religion* (1977) 1985.
- "Gigantes" (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0062:id=gigantes>)—*Harpers Dictionary of Classical Antiquities*
- Gigantes (<http://www.theoi.com/Gigante/Gigantes.html>)—Theoi Project

Hecatonchires

The **Hecatonchires**, or **Hekatonkheires** (ἑκατόκχηρες /ˌhɛkəˈtɒnkɪriːz/; Ancient Greek: ἑκατόγχειρες (listen) "Hundred-Handed Ones", Latinised *Centimani*), were figures in an archaic stage of Greek mythology, three giants of incredible strength and ferocity that surpassed that of all Titans whom they helped overthrow. Their name derives from the Greek ἑκατόν (*hekatón*; "hundred") and χεῖρ (*kheir*; "hand"), "each of them having a hundred hands and fifty heads" (*Bibliotheca*). Hesiod's *Theogony* (624, 639, 714, 734–35) reports that the three Hekatonkheires became the guards of the gates of Tartarus.

In Virgil's *Aeneid* (10.566–67), in which Aeneas is likened to one of them, Briareus (known here as Aegaeon), they fought on the side of the Titans rather than the Olympians; in this Virgil was following the lost Corinthian epic *Titanomachy* rather than the more familiar account in Hesiod.

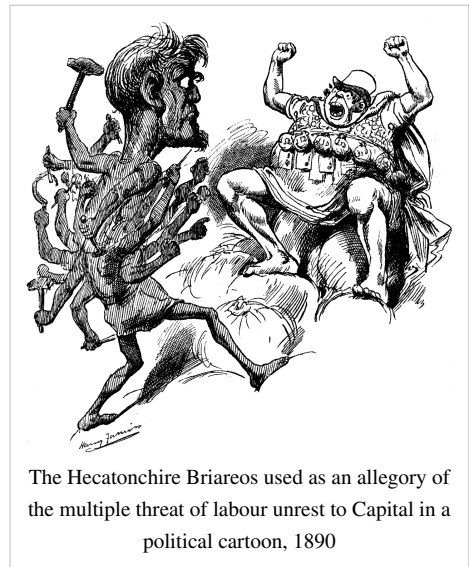
Other accounts make Briareus or Aegaeon one of the assailants of Olympus, who, after his defeat, was buried under Mount Aetna (Callimachus, *Hymn to Delos*, 141).

Mythology

Hesiod

According to Hesiod, the Hekatonkheires were children of Gaia (Earth) and Uranus (sky).^{[1][2]} They were thus part of the very beginning of things (Kerenyi 1951:19) in the submerged prehistory of Greek myth, though they played no known part in cult. Their names were **Briareus** (Βριάρεως) the Vigorous, also called **Aigaion** (Αἰγαίων), Latinised as **Aegaeon**, the "sea goat", **Cottus** (Κόττος) the Striker or the Furious, and **Gyges** (Γύγης) or **Gyes** (Γύης) the Big-Limbed. If some natural phenomena are symbolised by the Hekatoncheires then they may represent the gigantic forces of nature that appear in earthquakes and other convulsions or in the motion of sea waves (Mayer, *Die Giganten und Titanen*, 1887).

Soon after they were born their father Uranus threw them into the depths of Tartarus because he saw them as hideous monsters. In some versions Uranus saw how ugly the Hekatonkheires were at their birth and pushed them back into



The Hecatonchire Briareos used as an allegory of the multiple threat of labour unrest to Capital in a political cartoon, 1890

Gaia's womb, upsetting Gaia greatly, causing her great pain and setting into motion the overthrow of Uranus by Cronus, who later imprisoned them in Tartarus.

The Hekatonkheires remained there, guarded by the dragon Campe, until Zeus rescued them, advised by Gaia that they would serve as good allies against Cronus and the Titans. During the War of the Titans the Hekatonkheires threw rocks as big as mountains, one hundred at a time, at the Titans, overwhelming them.

Pausanias

In a Corinthian myth related in the second century CE to Pausanias (*Description of Greece* ii. 1.6 and 4.7), Briareus was the arbitrator in a dispute between Poseidon and Helios, between sea and sun: he adjudged the Isthmus of Corinth to belong to Poseidon and the acropolis of Corinth (Acrocorinth) sacred to Helios.

Others

Scholia on Apollonius of Rhodes (i. 1165) represent Aegaeon as a son of Gaea and Pontus, the Sea, ruling the fabulous Aegaea in Euboea, an enemy of Poseidon and the inventor of warships. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (ii. 10) and in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (iv. 6) he is a marine deity. Hesiod reconciles the archaic Hekatonkheires with the Olympian pantheon by making Briareos the son-in-law of Poseidon who gave him "Kymopoliea his daughter to wed." (*Theogony* 817).

Adaptations

Briareus is mentioned in the *Divine Comedy* poem *Inferno* as one of the Giants in the Ninth Circle of Hell (*Inferno* XXXI.99).

The giant is also mentioned in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, in the famous episode of the windmills.

Briareos is mentioned in Book I of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* alongside Typhon as an analogue to the fallen Satan.

Briareus is mentioned in *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, by Henry Fielding, in a conversation between Tom Jones and Mr. Partridge (Book 8, Chapter IX).

In *Don Juan* (Canto VI), Byron makes a slightly crude joke, musing whether "enviable Briareus ... with thy hands and heads ... had'st all things multiplied in proportion" (this thought arising from Byron's assertion of his love of all womankind in the previous canto).

Briareos Hecatonchires is also a character in the Anime and Manga *Appleseed*, where he plays a human who has been transformed into a Hecatonchire cyborg body, which also allows him to remotely control 100 systems. This is one of the many references to Greek mythology in the series, including Cottus (another cyborg) and Gyges (the brand name of a robot-shaped vehicle).

Briares appears in the *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* novel *The Battle of the Labyrinth*. He was imprisoned in a part of the Labyrinth that corresponds to Alcatraz and again guarded by Kampe. His brothers have died when no one remembered them causing him to give up hope and refuse the chance to escape his prison. He eventually overcomes his despair and fights against the Titans again. Briares fought in the First Titan War, and recalls it in *The Battle of the Labyrinth*.

A summonable entity (or eidolon) in *Final Fantasy XIII* is called "Hecatoncheir" and is summonable by Oerba Dia Vanille. It is the earth element summon, and the last to be obtained.

It is also a monster in *Dungeons & Dragons* that is commonly used by deities to kill other gods, keeping in line with the power of the Hekatonkheires and their strength.

In *Ace Combat 6*, there are three massive airborne weapons systems types named after and based upon the Hekatonkheires. The Aigaion-class airborne aircraft carrier, the Gyges-class electronic combat craft, and the Kottos-class anti-air weapon combat craft.

In *Bayonetta*, she can summon a demon called "Hecatoncheir" (though only six of the hands ever appear), usually to play volleyball using enemies as the ball, before crushing them between their fists.

In the *Ghost in the Shell* episode "Decoy", many-handed robots were referenced by Ishikawa using the name "Hecatoncheires". However in the original Japanese it is *heputonkeiru*, meaning "seven hands".

In Dan Simmons' *Olympos*, the god Hephaestus tells Achilles that the monster Setebos was called "Briareos" by the Olympian gods and "Aegaeon" by the early humans.

In the video game *Lord of Arcana*, there is a creature called "Hecatonheir", who looks like a Large and Fat Centaur with Two gigantic arms wielding a Great sword in its right arm and a Shield in its left arm.

In the video game series *Megami Tensei*, he is a summonable, fusable demon for the player to use in his or her party. The Japanese spelling often confuses others since it is *Hekatoncheir*, but the demon only has twelve arms and one large "face" with three mouths and six eyes. Prominently listed in the Evil Demon genus (Dark/Law).

Composer Iannis Xenakis has a cello solo-piece entitled *Kottos* (1977).

In the *God of War* comic series, Gyges appears as the final enemy who was trying to revive his brothers Briareus and Cottus using the Ambrosia of Asclepius. He is killed by the protagonist Kratos.

Notes

[1] Hesiod calls them the "Ouranids" (*Theogony* 502).

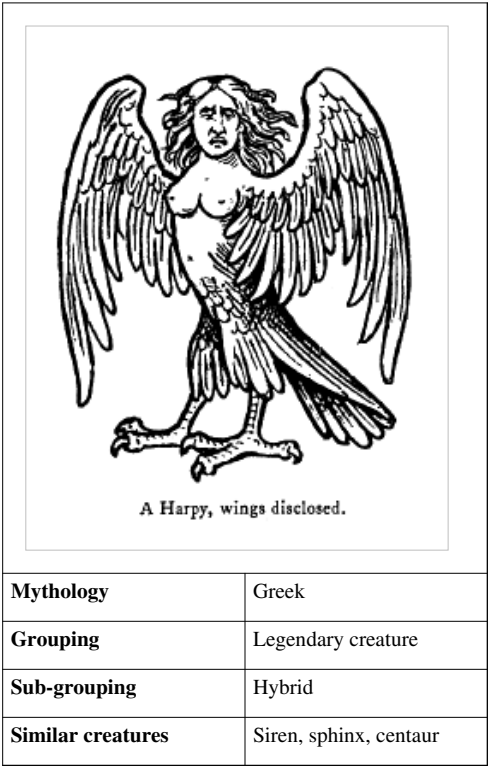
[2] A *scholia* on Apollonius Rhodius I.1165c notes "Eumelos in the *Titanomachy* says that Aigaion was the son of Earth and Sea, lived in the sea, and fought on the side of the Titans"; noted in M.L. West "Eumelos: A Corinthian Epic Cycle?" *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* **122** (2002, pp. 109–133) p 111.

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- *Bibliotheca* I.1.1 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Apollod.+1.1.1>)
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- Horace *Carminae* II.17.14, III.4.69
- Karl Kerényi, *Gods of the Greeks*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1951.
- Theoi Project - Briareos (<http://www.theoi.com/Titan/HekatonkheirBriareos.html>)

Harpy

Harpy



In Greek mythology, a **harpy** (Greek: ἄρπυια, *harpyia*; Latin: *harpeia*) was one of the winged spirits best known for constantly stealing all food from Phineus. The literal meaning of the word seems to be "that which snatches" as it comes from the ancient Greek word *harpazein* (ἁρπάζειν), which means "to snatch".

A harpy was the mother of the horses of Achilles sired by the West Wind Zephyros .^[1]

Hesiod^[2] calls them two "lovely-haired" creatures, and pottery art depicting the harpies featured beautiful women with wings. Harpies as ugly winged bird-women, *e.g.* in Aeschylus' *The Eumenides* (line 50) are a late development, due to a confusion with the Sirens. Roman and Byzantine writers detailed their ugliness.^[3]

Mythology



A harpy in Ulisse Aldrovandi's *Monstrorum Historia*, Bologna, 1642



A medieval depiction of a harpy as a bird-woman.

The harpies were sisters of Iris, daughters of Thaummas and Electra.^[4]

Phineus, a king of Thrace, had the gift of prophecy. Zeus, angry that Phineas revealed too much, punished him by blinding him and putting him on an island with a buffet of food which he could never eat. The harpies always arrived and stole the food out of his hands before he could satisfy his hunger, and befouled the remains of his food. This continued until the arrival of Jason and the Argonauts. The Boreads, sons of Boreas, the North Wind, who also could fly, succeeded in driving off the harpies, but without killing any of them, following a request from Iris, who promised that Phineas would not be bothered by the harpies again, and "the dogs of great Zeus" returned to their "cave in Minoan Crete". Thankful for their help, Phineas told the Argonauts how to pass the Symplegades.^[5]

In this form they were agents of punishment who abducted people and tortured them on their way to Tartarus. They were vicious, cruel and violent. They lived on the islands of the Strophades. They were usually seen as the personifications of the destructive nature of wind. The harpies in this tradition, now thought of as three sisters instead of the original two, were: Aello ("storm swift"), Celaeno ("the dark") — also known as Podarge ("fleet-foot") — and Ocypete ("the swift wing").

Aeneas encountered harpies on the Strophades as they repeatedly made off with the feast the Trojans were setting. Celaeno cursed them, saying the Trojans will be so hungry they will eat their tables before they reach the end of their journey. The Trojans fled in fear.

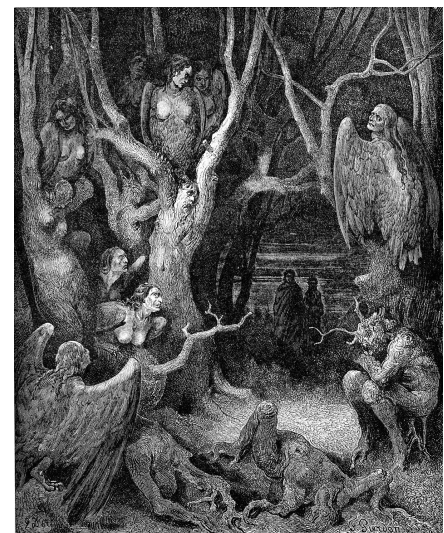
Harpies remained vivid in the Middle Ages. In his *Inferno*, XIII, Dante envisages the tortured wood infested with harpies, where the suicides have their punishment in the seventh ring of Hell:

Here the repellent harpies make their nests,
Who drove the Trojans from the Strophades
With dire announcements of the coming woe.
They have broad wings, a human neck and face,
Clawed feet and swollen, feathered bellies; they caw
Their lamentations in the eerie trees.^[6]

William Blake was inspired by Dante's description in his pencil, ink and watercolour "The Wood of the Self-Murderers: The Harpies and the Suicides" (Tate Gallery, London).

Heraldry

In the Middle Ages, the harpy, often called the "virgin eagle", became a popular charge in heraldry, particularly in East Frisia, seen on, among others, the coats-of-arms of Rietburg, Liechtenstein, and the Cirkseña



Harpies in the infernal wood, from *Inferno* XIII, by Gustave Doré, 1861

Harpies in reality

The American Harpy Eagle is a real bird named after the mythological animal.

The term is often used metaphorically to refer to a nasty or annoying woman. In Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, Benedick spots the sharp-tongued Beatrice approaching and exclaims to the Prince, Don Pedro, that he would do an assortment of arduous tasks for him "rather than hold three words conference with this harpy!"

Harpies in popular culture

With their composite form and violent nature, harpies are depicted in films, television and other aspects of popular culture. Harpies are commonly depicted as a race of bird-women, such as in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* book series. Occasionally the classic harpies are referenced by name, such as the appearance of Celaeno in Peter S. Beagle's novel *The Last Unicorn*. Harpies are also mentioned in the Percy Jackson series.

The character Mai Valentine in the Yu-gi-oh series uses a card deck based around Harpies.

Harpies appear in a number of different video games.

Harpies appear as a minor enemy throughout the *God of War* video game series which is loosely based on Greek mythology.

Harpies also appear in Dragon's Dogma. They are pictured white, with glowing red eyes.

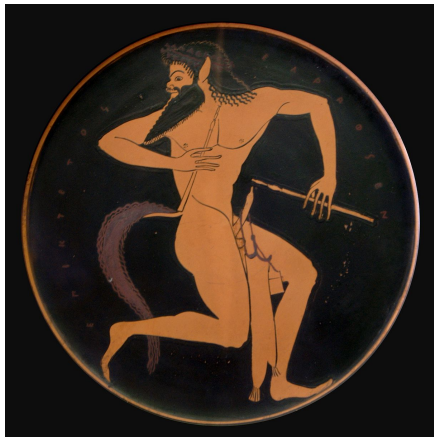
Harpies also play a role in The Witcher 2. They are known to steal the dreams of all living beings and can be hunted by the main character. They appear in numerous but similar forms.

References

- [1] *Iliad* xvi. 150.
- [2] Hesiod, *Theogony*, 267.
- [3] Virgil, *Aeneid* iii. 216; Ovid *Metamorphoses* vii.4, *Fasti* vi. 132; Hyginus, *Fabula* 14; Johannes Tzetzes, *Ad Lycophron* 653;
- [4] Hesiod, *eo. loc.*
- [5] *Argonautica*, book II; Ovid XIII, 710; Virgil III, 211, 245
- [6] Translation of Robert Pinsky, *Boston Review* (<http://bostonreview.net/BR18.1/dante.html>)

Satyr

Satyr



Satyr with pipe and a pipe case (Attic red-figure plate, 520–500 BC, from Vulci, Etruria

Mythology	Greek mythology
Grouping	Legendary creature
Sub-grouping	Hybrid
Country	Greece
Habitat	Woodland and mountains
Similar creatures	Minotaur, Centaur, Harpy

In Greek mythology, **satyrs** (UK /ˈsætər/, US /ˈseɪtər/)^[1] are a troop of half-man, half-goat male companions of Pan and Dionysus — "satyresses" were a late invention of poets — that roamed the woods and mountains.^[2] In myths they are often associated with pipe-playing.

The satyrs' chief was Silenus, a minor deity associated (like Hermes and Priapus) with fertility. These characters can be found in the only complete remaining satyr play, *Cyclops*, by Euripides, and the fragments of Sophocles' *Ichneutae* (*Tracking Satyrs*). The satyr play was a short, lighthearted tailpiece performed after each trilogy of tragedies in Athenian festivals honoring Dionysus. There is not enough evidence to determine whether the satyr play regularly drew on the same myths as those dramatized in the tragedies that preceded. The groundbreaking tragic playwright Aeschylus is said to have been especially loved for his satyr plays, but none of them have survived.

Attic painted vases depict mature satyrs as being strongly built with flat noses, large pointed ears, long curly hair, and full beards, with wreaths of vine or ivy circling their balding heads. Satyrs often carry the thyrsus: the rod of Dionysus tipped with a pine cone.

Satyrs acquired their goat-like aspect through later Roman conflation with Faunus, a carefree Italic nature spirit of similar characteristics and identified with the Greek god Pan. Hence satyrs are most commonly described in Latin literature as having the upper half of a man and the lower half of a goat, with a goat's tail in place of the Greek tradition of horse-tailed satyrs; therefore, satyrs became nearly identical with fauns. Mature satyrs are often depicted in Roman art with goat's horns, while juveniles are often shown with bony nubs on their foreheads.

About Satyrs, Praxiteles gives a new interpretation on the subject of free and carefree life. Instead of an elf with pointed ears and repulsive goat hooves, we face a child of nature, pure, but tame and fearless and brutal instincts necessary to enable it to defend itself against threats, and survives even without the help of modern civilization .

Above all though, the Satyr with flute has a small companion for him, shows the deep connection with nature, the soft whistle of the wind, the sound of gurgling water of the crystal spring, the birds singing, or perhaps the singing a melody of a human soul that feeds higher feelings. As Dionysiac creatures they are lovers of wine and women, and they are ready for every physical pleasure. They roam to the music of pipes (*auloi*), cymbals, castanets, and bagpipes, and they love to dance with the nymphs (with whom they are obsessed, and whom they often pursue), and have a special form of dance called sikinnis. Because of their love of wine, they are often represented holding wine cups, and they appear often in the decorations on wine cups.

In Greek mythology and art

In earlier Greek art, satyrs appear as old and ugly, but in later art, especially in works of the Attic school, this savage characteristic is softened into a more youthful and graceful aspect.

This transformation or humanization of the Satyr appears throughout late Greek art. Another example of this shift occurs in the portrayal of Medusa and in that of the Amazon, characters who are traditionally depicted as barbaric and uncivilized. A very humanized Satyr is depicted in a work of Praxiteles known as the "Resting Satyr".

Older satyrs were known as sileni, the younger as satyrisci. The hare was the symbol of the shy and timid satyr. Greek spirits known as Calicantsars have a noticeable resemblance to the ancient satyrs; they have goats' ears and the feet of donkeys or goats or horses, are covered with hair, and love women and the dance.

Although they are not mentioned by Homer, in a fragment of Hesiod's works they are called brothers of the mountain nymphs and Kuretes, strongly connected with the cult of Dionysus. In the Dionysus cult, male followers are known as satyrs and female followers as maenads or bacchantes.

In Attica there was a species of drama known as the legends of gods and heroes, and the chorus was composed of satyrs and sileni. In the Athenian satyr plays of the 5th century BC, the chorus commented on the action. This "satyric drama" burlesqued the serious events of the mythic past with lewd pantomime and subversive mockery. One complete satyr play from the 5th century survives, the *Cyclops* of Euripides.

A papyrus bearing a long fragment of a satyr play by Sophocles, given the title 'Tracking Satyrs' (*Ichneutae*), was found at Oxyrhynchus in Egypt, 1907.



Satyr on a mountain goat, drinking with women, in a Gandhara relief of 2nd-4th century CE



Dancing satyr on a sardonyx intaglio, 1st century BC or beginning of 1st century

In Roman mythology and art



Satyr pursuing a nymph, on a Roman mosaic

Roman satyrs were conflated in the popular and poetic imagination with Latin spirits of woodland and with the rustic Greek god Pan. Roman satyrs were described as goat-like from the haunches to the hooves, and were often pictured with larger horns, even ram's horns. Roman poets often conflated them with the fauns.

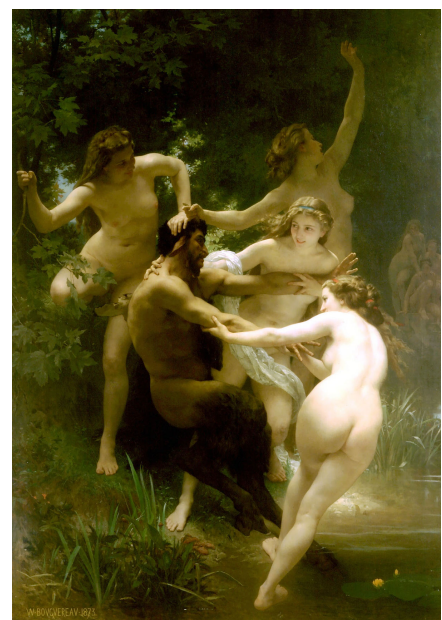
Roman satire is a literary form, a poetic essay that was a vehicle for biting, subversive social and personal criticism. Though Roman satire is sometimes linked to the Greek satyr plays, satire's only connection to the satyric drama is through the subversive nature of the satyrs themselves, as forces in opposition to urbanity, decorum, and civilization itself.

Other references

In many versions of the Bible, Isaiah 13:21 and 34:14, the English word "satyr" is used to represent the Hebrew *se'irim*, "hairy ones," from "sa'ir" or "goat". There is an allusion to the practice of sacrificing to the se'irim (KJV "devils"; ASV "he-goats") in Leviticus 17:7. They may correspond to the "shaggy demon of the mountain-pass" (*azabb al-'akaba*) of old Arab legend.^[3] It may otherwise refer to literal goats, and the worship of such.^[4]

The savant Sir William Jones often refers to the Indian mythological Vānaras as satyrs/mountaineers in his translations of Sanskrit works. This view is generally held to be a mistake by present day researchers.

Satyrs appear in the video game franchise God of War as the nastiest and most annoying enemies. These characteristics are not true to the origins of the fabled creature.



Nymphs and Satyr(William-Adolphe Bouguereau, 1873)

Baby satyr

Baby satyrs, or **child satyrs**, are mythological creatures related to the satyr. They appear in popular folklore, classical artworks, film, and in various forms of local art.

Some classical works depict young satyrs being tended to by older, sober satyrs, while there are also some representations of child satyrs taking part in Bacchanalian / Dionysian rituals (including drinking alcohol, playing musical instruments, and dancing).

The presence of a baby or child satyr in a classical work, such as on a Greek vase, was mainly an aesthetic choice on the part of the artist. However, the role of a child in Greek art might imply a further meaning for baby satyrs: Eros, the son of Aphrodite, is consistently represented as a child or baby, and Bacchus, the divine sponsor of satyrs, is seen in numerous works as a baby, often in the company of the satyrs. A prominent instance of a baby satyr outside ancient Greece is Albrecht Dürer's 1505 engraving, "Musical Satyr and Nymph with Baby (Satyr's Family)". There is also a Victorian period napkin ring depicting a baby satyr next to a barrel, which further represents the perception of baby satyrs as partaking in the Bacchanalian festivities.^[5]

There are also many works of art of the rococo period depicting child or baby satyrs in Bacchanalian celebrations. Some works depict female satyrs with their children; others describe the child satyrs as playing an active role in the events, including one instance of a painting by Jean Raoux (1677–1735). "Mlle Prévost as a Bacchante" depicts a child satyr playing a tambourine while Mlle Prévost, a dancer at the Opéra, is dancing as part of the Bacchanal festivities.^[6]



Female Satyr Carrying Two Putti by Claude Michel (1738–1814)

Satyrs and orangutan

In the 17th century, the satyr legend came to be associated with stories of the orangutan, a great ape now found only in Sumatra and Borneo. Many early accounts which apparently refer to this animal describe the males as being sexually aggressive towards human women and towards females of its own species. The first scientific name given to this ape was *Simia satyrus*.^[7]

Varieties

- Island Satyrs, which according to Pausanias^[8] were a savage race of red-haired, satyr-like creatures from an isolated island chain.
- Libyan Aegipanes (goat-pans), which according to Pliny the Elder^[9] lived in Libya, had human heads and torsos, and the legs and horns of goats, and were similar to the Greek god Pan.
- Libyan Satyr, which according to Pliny the Elder^[9] lived in Libya and resembled humans with long, pointed ears and horse tails, similar to the Greek nature-spirit satyrs.

Medieval bestiaries also mention several varieties of satyrs, sometimes comparing them to apes or monkeys.^[10]

Notes

- [1] Wells, John C. (2009). "satyr". *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*. London: Pearson Longman. ISBN 978-1-4058-8118-0.
- [2] Branham (1997) p.23 (http://books.google.com/books?id=XrNEns3_yd0C&pg=PR23)
- [3] "Satyrs," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed. (1911), vol. 24, p. 234.
- [4] Palestine Exploration Quarterly, London, 1959, p. 57
- [5] *Revivals, Reveries, and Reconstructions: Images of Antiquity in Prints from 1500 to 1800*, Philamuseum.org (<http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/2000/30.html>), exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.
- [6] UNH.edu (<http://www.unh.edu/music/Icon/igtamms.htm>)
- [7] C. W. Stiles. 1926. The zoological names *Simia*, *S. satyrus*, and *Pithecus*, and their possible suppression. *Nature* 118, 49-49. (<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v118/n2958/abs/118049b0.html>)
- [8] "Island Satyrs" (<http://www.theoi.com/Thaumasios/SatyroiNesioi.html>). *Theoi Greek Mythology*. . Retrieved 2008-12-28.
- [9] "Libyan Aegipans & Satyrs" (<http://www.theoi.com/Thaumasios/SatyroiLibyes.html>). *Theoi Greek Mythology*. . Retrieved 2008-12-28.
- [10] Debra Hassing, "Sex in the Bestiaries," in *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999), p. 73 and 88 (note 16); Willene B. Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts. The Second-Family Bestiary: Commentary, Art, Text and Translation* (Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 133–132.

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- Branham, R Bracht and Kinney, Daniel (1997) *Introduction to Petronius' Satyricon* pp.xiii-xxvi (http://books.google.com/books?id=XrNEns3_yd0C&pg=PR13)

External links

- Theoi Project: Satyroi (<http://www.theoi.com/Georgikos/Satyroi.html>)
- Satyrs in Cryptozoology (<http://www.newanimal.org/satyr.htm>)
- Jewish Encyclopedia: Satyr (<http://jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=274&letter=S&search=Satyr>)



"Le Satyre", Jules Fontanez

Siren

Siren



Mythology	Greek
Grouping	Mythological
Sub-grouping	Avian hybrid
Habitat	Seagirt meadow
Similar creatures	Mermaid Merman Undine

In Greek mythology, the **Sirens** (Greek singular: Σειρήν *Seirēn*; Greek plural: Σειρῆνες *Seirēnes*) were dangerous and devious creatures, portrayed as femmes fatales who lured nearby sailors with their enchanting music and voices to shipwreck on the rocky coast of their island. Roman poets placed them on some small islands called Sirenum scopuli. In some later, rationalized traditions, the literal geography of the "flowery" island of Anthemoessa, or Anthemusa,^[1] is fixed: sometimes on Cape Pelorum and at others in the islands known as the Sirenuse, near Paestum, or in Capreae.^[2] All such locations were surrounded by cliffs and rocks.

When the Sirens were given a name of their own they were considered the daughters of the river god Achelous, fathered upon Terpsichore, Melpomene, Sterope, or Chthon (the Earth; in Euripides' *Helen* 167, Helen in her anguish calls upon "Winged maidens, daughters of the Earth"). Although they lured mariners, for the Greeks the Sirens in their "meadow starred with flowers" were not sea deities. Roman writers linked the Sirens more closely to the sea, as daughters of Phorcys.^[3] Sirens are found in many Greek stories, particularly in Homer's *The Odyssey*.

Their number is variously reported as between two and five. In the *Odyssey*, Homer says nothing of their origin or names, but gives the number of the Sirens as two.^[4] Later writers mention both their names and number: some state that there were three, Peisinoe, Aglaope, and Thelxiepeia (Tzetzes, *ad Lycophron* 712) or Parthenope, Ligeia, and Leucosia (Eustathius, loc. cit.; Strabo v. §246, 252 ; Servius' commentary on Virgil's *Georgics* iv. 562); Eustathius (Commentaries §1709) states that they were two, Aglaopheme and Thelxiepeia. Their individual names are variously rendered in the later sources as Thelxiepeia/Thelxiope/Thelxinoe, Molpe, Aglaophonos/Aglaope/Aglaopheme, Pisinoe/Peisinoë/Peisithoe, Parthenope, Ligeia, Leucosia, Raidne, and Teles.^{[5][6][7][8][9]}

The Sirens of Greek mythology are sometimes portrayed in later folklore as fully aquatic and mermaid-like; the fact that in Spanish, French, Italian, Polish, Romanian and Portuguese the word for *mermaid* is respectively *Sirena*, *Sirène*, *Sirena*, *Syrena*, *Sirenă* and *Sereia*, and that in biology the *Sirenia* comprise an order of fully aquatic mammals that includes the dugong and manatee, add to the visual confusion, so that Sirens are even represented as mermaids. However, "the sirens, though they sing to mariners, are *not* sea-maidens," Jane Ellen Harrison has cautioned; "they dwell on an island in a flowery meadow."^[10]

Sirens and death



The Siren, by John William Waterhouse (circa 1900), depicted as a fish-chimera.

According to Ovid (*Metamorphoses* V, 551), the Sirens were the companions of young Persephone and were given wings by Demeter^[11] to search for Persephone when she was abducted. However, the *Fabulae* of Hyginus has Demeter cursing the Sirens for failing to intervene in the abduction of Persephone.

The Sirens might be called the Muses of the lower world, Walter Copland Perry observed: "Their song, though irresistibly sweet, was no less sad than sweet, and lapped both body and soul in a fatal lethargy, the forerunner of death and corruption."^[12] Their song is continually calling on Persephone. The term "siren song" refers to an appeal that is hard to resist but that, if heeded, will lead to a bad conclusion. Later writers have inferred that the Sirens were anthropophagous, based on Circe's description of them "lolling there in their meadow, round them heaps of corpses rotting away, rags of skin shriveling on their bones."^[13] As Jane Ellen Harrison notes of "The Ker as siren:" "It is strange and beautiful that Homer should make the Sirens appeal to the spirit, not to the flesh."^[14] For the matter of the siren song is a promise to Odysseus of mantic truths; with a false promise that he will live to tell them, they sing,

Once he hears to his heart's content, sails on, a wiser man.

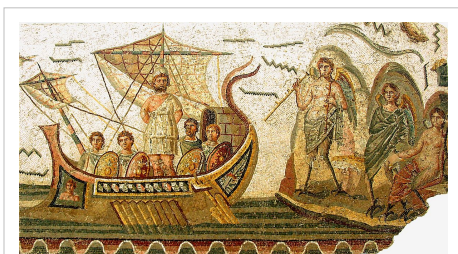
We know all the pains that the Greeks and Trojans once endured
on the spreading plain of Troy when the gods willed it so—
all that comes to pass on the fertile earth, we know it all!^[15]

"They are mantic creatures like the Sphinx with whom they have much in common, knowing both the past and the future," Harrison observed. "Their song takes effect at midday, in a windless calm. The end of that song is death."^[16] That the sailors' flesh is rotting away, though, would suggest it has not been eaten. It has been suggested that, with their feathers stolen, their divine nature kept them alive, but unable to feed for their visitors, who starved to death by refusing to leave.^[17]

According to Hyginus, sirens were fated to live only until the mortals who heard their songs were able to pass by them.^[18]

Appearance

Sirens combine women and birds in various ways. In early Greek art Sirens were represented as birds with large women's heads, bird feathers and scaly feet. Later, they were represented as female figures with the legs of birds, with or without wings, playing a variety of musical instruments, especially harps. The tenth century Byzantine encyclopedia *Suda*^[19] says that from their chests up Sirens had the form of sparrows, below they were women, or, alternatively, that they were little birds with women's faces. Birds were chosen because of their beautiful voices. Later Sirens were sometimes depicted as beautiful women, whose bodies, not only their voices, are seductive.



Roman mosaic: Odysseus and the Sirens (Bardo National Museum)

The first century Roman historian Pliny the Elder discounted Sirens as pure fable, "although Dinon, the father of Clearchus, a celebrated writer, asserts that they exist in India, and that they charm men by their song, and, having first lulled them to sleep, tear them to pieces."^[20] In his notebooks Leonardo da Vinci wrote of the Siren, "The siren

sings so sweetly that she lulls the mariners to sleep; then she climbs upon the ships and kills the sleeping mariners."

In 1917, Franz Kafka wrote in *The Silence of the Sirens*, "Now the Sirens have a still more fatal weapon than their song, namely their silence. And though admittedly such a thing never happened, it is still conceivable that someone might possibly have escaped from their singing; but from their silence certainly never."

The so-called "Siren of Canosa"^[21] accompanied the deceased among grave goods in a burial and seems to have some psychopomp characteristics, guiding the dead on the after-life journey. The cast terracotta figure bears traces of its original white pigment. The woman bears the feet and the wings and tail of a bird. It is conserved in the National Archaeological Museum of Spain, in Madrid.^[22]

Encounters with the Sirens



Odysseus and the Sirens, eponymous vase of the Siren Painter, ca. 480-470 BC, (British Museum)

In *Argonautica* (4.891–919), Jason had been warned by Chiron that Orpheus would be necessary in his journey. When Orpheus heard their voices, he drew out his lyre and played his music more beautifully than they, drowning out their voices. One of the crew, however, the sharp-eared hero Butes, heard the song and leapt into the sea, but he was caught up and carried safely away by the goddess Aphrodite.

Odysseus was curious as to what the Sirens sung in their song to him, so, on Circe's advice, he had all his sailors plug their ears with beeswax and tie him to the mast. He ordered his men to leave him tied tightly to the mast, no matter how much he would beg. When he heard their beautiful song, he ordered the sailors to untie him but they bound him tighter. When they had passed out of earshot, Odysseus demonstrated with his frowns to be released.^[23]

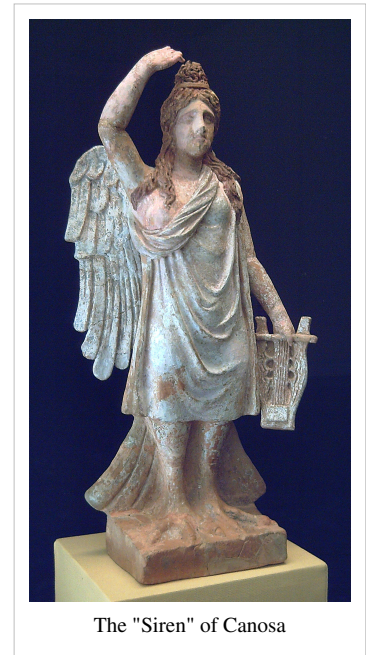
Some post-Homeric authors state that the Sirens were fated to die if someone heard their singing and escaped them, and that after Odysseus passed by they therefore flung themselves into the water and perished.^[24] It is also said that Hera, queen of the gods, persuaded the Sirens to enter a singing contest with the Muses. The Muses won the competition and then plucked out all of the Sirens' feathers and made crowns out of them.^[25] Out of their anguish from losing the competition, writes Stephanus of Byzantium, the Sirens turned white and fell into the sea at Aptera ("featherless") where they formed the islands in the bay that were called *Souda* (modern Lefkai).^[26]

Christian belief

By the fourth century, when pagan beliefs gave way to Christianity, belief in literal sirens was discouraged. Although Jerome, who produced the Latin Vulgate version of the Scriptures, used the word "sirens" to translate Hebrew *tenim* (jackals) in Isaiah 13:22, and also to translate a word for "owls" in Jeremiah 50:39, this was explained by Ambrose to be a mere symbol or allegory for worldly temptations, and not an endorsement of the Greek myth.^[27]

Sirens continued to be used as a symbol for the dangerous temptation embodied by women regularly throughout Christian art of the medieval era; however, in the 17th century, some Jesuit writers began to assert their actual existence, including Cornelius a Lapide, who said of Woman, "her glance is that of the fabled basilisk, her voice a siren's voice—with her voice she enchants, with her beauty she deprives of reason—voice and sight alike deal destruction and death."^[28] Antonio de Lorea also argued for their existence, and Athanasius Kircher argued that compartments must have been built for them aboard Noah's Ark.^[29]

The Early Christian euhemerist interpretation of mythologized human beings received a long-lasting boost from Isidore's *Etymologiae*.^[30] "They [the Greeks] imagine that 'there were three Sirens, part virgins, part birds,' with wings and claws. 'One of them sang, another played the flute, the third the lyre. They drew sailors, decoyed by song, to shipwreck. According to the truth, however, they were prostitutes who led travelers down to poverty and were said to impose shipwreck on them.' They had wings and claws because Love flies and wounds. They are said to have stayed in the waves because a wave created Venus."



The "Siren" of Canosa



Odysseus and the Sirens. An 1891 painting by John William Waterhouse.

Charles Burney expounded c. 1789, in *A General History of Music*: "The name, according to Bochart, who derives it from the Phoenician, implies a *songstress*. Hence it is probable, that in ancient times there may have been excellent singers, but of corrupt morals, on the coast of Sicily, who by seducing voyagers, gave rise to this fable."^[31] John Lemprière in his *Classical Dictionary* (1827) wrote, "Some suppose that the Sirens were a number of lascivious women in Sicily, who prostituted themselves to strangers, and made them forget their pursuits while drowned in unlawful pleasures. The etymology of Bochart, who

deduces the name from a Phoenician term denoting a *songstress*, favours the explanation given of the fable by Damm.^[32] This distinguished critic makes the Sirens to have been excellent singers, and divesting the fables respecting them of all their terrific features, he supposes that by the charms of music and song they detained travellers, and made them altogether forgetful of their native land."^[33]

Such euhemerist interpretations have been abandoned since the later 19th century, in favour of analyses of Greek mythology in terms of historical Greek social structure and their cultural system, and the Greek taxonomy of the spiritual world.

In the Book of Watchers 19:2-3, supposedly authored by Enoch, great-grandfather of Noah, the women taken as wives by the Grigori of angels became sirens.^[34]

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- [1] "We must steer clear of the Sirens, their enchanting song, their meadow starred with flowers" is Robert Fagles' rendering of *Odyssey* 12.158–9.
- [2] Strabo i. 22 ; Eustathius of Thessalonica's Homeric commentaries §1709 ; Servius I.e.
- [3] Virgil. V. 846; Ovid XIV, 88.
- [4] *Odyssey* 12.52
- [5] Linda Phyllis Austern, Inna Naroditskaya, *Music of the Sirens* (http://books.google.de/books?id=5IBSGG9YegwC&pg=PT27&dq=three+sirens+mythology&hl=en&sa=X&ei=I2X-ToWyJ_DN4QSIkNGNCA&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=three+sirens+mythology&f=false), Indiana University Press, 2006, p.18
- [6] William Hansen, William F. Hansen, *Classical Mythology: A Guide to the Mythical World of the Greeks and Romans* (http://books.google.de/books?id=a-NmaO-kM2UC&pg=PA307&dq=three+sirens+mythology&hl=en&sa=X&ei=KWv-ToOrBs_Zsgamuv3dDg&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=three+sirens+mythology&f=false), Oxford University Press, 2005, p.307
- [7] Ken Dowden, Niall Livingstone, *A Companion to Greek Mythology* (http://books.google.de/books?id=_XsN0O-BQ0cC&pg=PA353&dq=three+sirens+mythology&hl=en&sa=X&ei=I2X-ToWyJ_DN4QSIkNGNCA&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=three+sirens+mythology&f=false), Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, p.353
- [8] Mike Dixon-Kennedy, *Encyclopedia of Greco-Roman Mythology* (http://books.google.de/books?id=2U7okUE3PIcC&pg=PA281&dq=three+sirens+mythology&hl=en&sa=X&ei=I2X-ToWyJ_DN4QSIkNGNCA&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=three+sirens+mythology&f=false), ABC-Clío, 1998, p.281
- [9] Sirens (<http://www.theoi.com/Pontios/Seirenes.html>), on Theoi Greek Mythology
- [10] Harrison 198f.
- [11] Ovid has asked rhetorically, "Whence came these feathers and these feet of birds?" "Ovid's aetiology is of course beside the mark," Jane Ellen Harrison observed; the Keres (mythology), the Sphinx and even archaic representations of Athena are winged; so is Eos and some Titans in the Gigantomachy reliefs on the Great Altar of Pergamon; Eros is often winged, and the Erotes.
- [12] Perry, "The sirens in ancient literature and art", in *The Nineteenth Century*, reprinted in *Choice Literature: a monthly magazine* (New York) 2 (September–December 1883:163).
- [13] *Odyssey* 12.45–6, Fagles' translation.
- [14] Harrison 198
- [15] *Odyssey* 12.188–91, Fagles' translation.
- [16] Harrison 199
- [17] liner notes to *Fresh Aire VI* by Jim Shey, Classics Department, University of Wisconsin
- [18] Pseudo-Hyginus, *Fabulae* 141 (trans. Grant)
- [19] Suda on-line (http://www.stoa.org/sol-bin//search.pl?search_method=QUERY&login=&enlogin=&searchstr=sigma,280&field=adlerhw_gr&db=REAL)
- [20] Pliny's Natural History 10:70
- [21] Canosa di Puglia, a site in Apulia that was part of Magna Graecia.
- [22] Image of La Sirena de Canosa
- [23] *Odyssey* XII, 39
- [24] Hyginus, *Fabulae* 141; Lycophron, *Alexandra* 712 ff.
- [25] Lemprière 768.
- [26] Caroline M. Galt, "A marble fragment at Mount Holyoke College from the Cretan city of Aptera", *Art and Archaeology* 6 (1920:150).
- [27] Ambrose, *Exposition of the Christian Faith*, Bk 3, Chap. 1, 4
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- [31] Austern, Linda Phyllis, and Inna Naroditskaya (eds.) (2006). *Music of the Sirens*. Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 72
- [32] Damm, perhaps *Mythologie der Griechen und Römer* (ed. Leveiw). Berlin, 1820.
- [33] Lemprière 768. Brackets in the original.
- [34] Enoch "Watchers" (<http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/ethiopian/enoch/1watchers/watchers.htm>)

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Further reading

- Siegfried de Rachewiltz, *De Sirenibus: An Inquiry into Sirens from Homer to Shakespeare*, 1987: chs: "Some notes on posthomeric sirens; Christian sirens; Boccaccio's siren and her legacy; The Sirens' mirror; The siren as emblem the emblem as siren; Shakespeare's siren tears; brief survey of siren scholarship; the siren in folklore; bibliography"

External links

- Theoi Project, Seirenes (<http://www.theoi.com/Pontios/Seirenes.html>) the Sirens in classical literature and art
 - The Suda (Byzantine Encyclopedia) on the Sirens (http://www.stoa.org/sol-bin/search.pl?db=REAL&search_method=QUERY&login=guest&enlogin=guest&user_list=LIST&page_num=1&searchstr=sigma,280+&field=adlerhw_gr&num_per_page=100)
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Unique Creatures

Python

In Greek mythology, **Python** (Greek: Πύθων, *gen.*: Πύθωνος) was the earth-dragon of Delphi, always represented in Greek sculpture and vase-paintings as a serpent. He presided at the Delphic oracle, which existed in the cult center for his mother, Gaia, "Earth," **Pytho** being the place name that was substituted for the earlier *Krisa*.^[1] Hellenes considered the site to be the center of the earth, represented by a stone, the *omphalos* or navel, which Python guarded.

Python became the chthonic enemy of the later Olympian deity Apollo, who slew him and remade his former home and the oracle, the most famous^[2] in Classical Greece, as his own. Changes

such as these in ancient myths may reflect a profound change in the religious concepts of Hellenic culture. Some were gradual over time and others occurred abruptly following invasion.



Apollo killing Python. A 1581 engraving by Virgil Solis for Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book I

Versions and interpretations

There are various versions of Python's birth and death at the hands of Apollo. In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, now thought to have been composed in 522 BCE during Classical times,^[3] a small detail is provided regarding Apollo's combat with the serpent, in some sections identified as the deadly Drakaina, or her parent.

The version related by Hyginus^[4] holds that when Zeus lay with the goddess Leto, and she was to deliver Artemis and Apollo, Hera sent Python to pursue her throughout the lands, so that she could not deliver wherever the sun shone. Thus when Apollo the infant was grown he pursued Python, making his way straight for Mount Parnassus where the serpent dwelled, and chased it to the oracle of Gaia at Delphi; there he dared to penetrate the sacred precinct and kill it with his arrows beside the rock cleft where the priestess sat on her tripod. Robert Graves, who habitually read into primitive myths a retelling of archaic political and social turmoil, saw in this the capturing by Hellenes of a pre-Hellenic shrine. "To placate local opinion at Delphi," he wrote in *The Greek Myths*, "regular funeral games were instituted in honour of the dead hero Python, and her priestess was retained in office."

The politics are conjectural, but the myth reports that Zeus ordered Apollo to purify himself for the sacrilege and instituted the Pythian Games, over which Apollo was to preside, as penance for his act.

Erwin Rohde wrote that the Python was an earth spirit, who was conquered by Apollo, and buried under the Omphalos, and that it is a case of one god setting up his temple on the grave of another.^[5]

The priestess of the oracle at Delphi became known as the **Pythia**, after the place-name Pytho, which Greeks explained as named after the rotting (πύθειν) of the slain serpent's corpse in the strength of Hyperion (day) or Helios (the sun).^[6]

Karl Kerényi points out^[7] that the older tales mentioned two dragons, who were perhaps intentionally conflated; the other was a female dragon (*drakaina*) named Delphyne in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, with whom dwelt a male serpent named Typhon: "The narrators seem to have confused the dragon of Delphi, Python, with Typhon or Typhoeus, the adversary of Zeus". The enemy dragoness "... actually became an Apollonian serpent, and Pythia, the priestess who gave oracles at Delphi, was named after him. Many pictures show the serpent Python living in amity with Apollo and guarding the Omphalos, the sacred navel-stone and mid-point of the earth, which stood in Apollo's temple" (Kerényi 1951:136).

Notes

- [1] *Hymn to Pythian Apollo*, l. 254-74: Telpousa recommends to Apollo to build his oracle temple at the site of "Krisa below the glades of Parnassus".
- [2] But also see Dodona, famous in the earliest traditions.
- [3] Walter Burkert, "Kynaithos, Polycrates and the Homeric Hymn to Apollo" in *Arktouros: Hellenic studies presented to B. M. W. Knox* ed. G. W. Bowersock, W. Burkert, M. C. J. Putnam (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1979) pp. 53-62.
- [4] *Fabulae* 140.
- [5] cf. Rohde, *Psyche*, p.97.
- [6] *Homeric Hymn to Pythian Apollo*, 363-369.
- [7] Kerényi *The Gods of the Greeks* 1951:136.

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Ladon

Ladon (Greek: Λάδων; gen.: Λάδωνος) was the serpent-like dragon that twined and twisted around the tree in the Garden of the Hesperides and guarded the golden apples. He was overcome by Heracles. The following day, Jason and the Argonauts passed by on their chthonic return journey from Colchis and heard the lament of "shining" Aegle, one of the four Hesperides, and viewed the still-twitching Ladon.^[1]

Ladon was given several parentages, each of which placed him at an archaic level in Greek myth: the offspring of "Ceto, joined in heated passion with Phorcys"^[2] or of Typhon, who was himself serpent-like from the waist down, and Echidna^[3] or of Gaia herself, or in her Olympian manifestation, Hera: "The Dragon which guarded the golden apples was the brother of the Nemean lion" asserted Ptolemy Hephaestion.^[4] In one version, Heracles did not kill Ladon.



Heracles and Ladon, Roman relief plate, late era.

The image of the dragon(Ladon) coiled round the tree, originally adopted by the Hellenes from Near Eastern and Minoan sources, is familiar from surviving Greek vase-painting. In the 2nd century CE, Pausanias saw among the treasuries at Olympia an archaic cult image in cedar-wood of Heracles and the apple-tree of the Hesperides with the dragon coiled around it.^[5]

Ladon might be given multiple heads, a hundred in Aristophanes' *The Frogs* (a passing remark in line 475), which might speak with different voices.

Diodorus Siculus gives an euhemerist interpretation of Ladon, as a human shepherd guarding a flock of golden-fleeced sheep, adding "But with regards to such matters it will be every man's privilege to form such opinions as accord with his own belief".^[6]

Ladon is the constellation Draco,^[7] according to Hyginus' *Astronomy*.^[8] Ladon is the Greek version of the West Semitic serpent Lotan, or the Hurrian serpent Illuyanka.

References

- [1] *Argonautica*, Book IV.
- [2] Hesiod. *Theogony*, 333.
- [3] *Bibliothèque* 2.113; Hyginus, Preface to *Fabulae*.
- [4] Recorded in his *New History* V, lost but epitomized in Photius, *Myriobiblion* 190.
- [5] Pausanias. *Description of Greece*, 6.19.8.
- [6] Diodorus Siculus, 4.26.2.
- [7] Theoi.com: Drakon Hesperos (<http://www.theoi.com/Ther/DrakonHesperos.html>)
- [8] Hyginus Theoi.com: Hyginus, "*Astronomica 1*" translated by Mary Grant (<http://www.theoi.com/Text/HyginusAstronomica.html#3>)

Typhon

Typhon (Τυφών /ˈtaɪfən/; Ancient Greek: Τυφών, *Tuphōn*, Greek pronunciation: [tɪpʰōːn]), also **Typhoeus** (Τυφωεύς, *Tuphōeus*), **Typhaon** (Τυφάων, *Tuphaōn*) or **Typhos** (Τυφός, *Tuphōs*) was the last son of Gaia, fathered by Tartarus, and the most deadly monster of Greek mythology. He was known as the "Father of all monsters"; his wife Echidna was likewise the "Mother of All Monsters."

Typhon was described in pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliothēke*, as the largest and most fearsome of all creatures. His human upper half reached as high as the stars. His hands reached east and west and, instead of a human head, he had a hundred dragon heads; some however depict him as having a human head and the dragon heads being attached to his hands instead of fingers. He was feared even by the mighty gods. His bottom half was gigantic viper coils that could reach the top of his head when stretched out and made a hissing noise. His whole body was covered in wings, and fire flashed from his eyes.

Typhon attempts to destroy Zeus at the will of Gaia, because Zeus had imprisoned the Titans. Typhon overcomes Zeus in their first battle, and tears out Zeus' sinews. However, Hermes recovers the sinews and restores them to Zeus. Typhon is finally defeated by Zeus, who traps him underneath Mount Etna.

Accounts

Hesiod narrates Typhon's birth in this poem:

But when Zeus had driven the Titans from Olympus,
 mother Earth bare her youngest child Typhoeus of the love of
 Tartarus, by the aid of golden Aphrodite.
 —Hesiod, *Theogony* 820–822.

In the alternative account of the origin of Typhon (Typhoeus), the Homeric Hymn to Apollo makes the monster Typhaon at Delphi a son of archaic Hera in her Minoan form, produced out of herself, like a monstrous version of Hephaestus or Mars, and whelped in a cave in Cilicia and confined there in the enigmatic Arima, or land of the Arimoι, *en Arimois* (*Iliad*, ii. 781–783). It was in Cilicia that Zeus battled with the ancient monster and overcame him, in a more complicated story: It was not an easy battle, and Typhon temporarily overcame Zeus, cut the "sinews" from him and left him in the "leather sack", the *korukos* that is the etymological origin of the *korukion andron*, the Korykian or Corycian Cave in which Zeus suffers temporary eclipse as if in the Land of the Dead. The region of Cilicia in southeastern Anatolia had many opportunities for coastal Hellenes' connection with the Hittites to the north. From its first reappearance, the Hittite myth of Illuyankas has been seen as a prototype of the battle of Zeus and Typhon.^[1] Walter Burkert and Calvert Watkins each note the close agreements. Watkins' *How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (Oxford University Press) 1995, reconstructs in disciplined detail the flexible Indo-European poetic formula that underlies myth, epic and magical charm texts of the lashing and binding of Typhon.



Zeus hurling his lightning at Typhon, Chalcidian black-figured hydria, ca. 550 BC, Staatliche Antikensammlungen (Inv. 596)

Typhon was known to be a large humanoid beast. Typhon was the last child of Gaia. After the defeat of his brothers, the Gigantes, Gaia urged him to avenge them, as well as his other brothers, the Titans.

Offspring

Typhon fathered several children by his niece, Echidna, daughter of Phorcys and Ceto:

- Orthrus, a fearsome two-headed hound. *Theogony*, 306ff.^[2] Orthrus, and his master, Eurytion, son of Ares and the Hesperid Erytheia, guarded the fabulous red cattle of Geryon. Both were slain, along with Geryon, when Heracles stole the red cattle.
- The Sphinx was sent by Hera to plague the city of Thebes. She was the most brilliant of Typhon's children, and would slay anyone who could not answer her riddles (possibly by strangling them). When Oedipus finally answered her riddle, she threw herself into the ocean in a fit of fury and drowned.
- The Nemean Lion was a gigantic lion with impenetrable skin. Selene, the moon goddess, adored the beast. Heracles was commanded to slay the Lion as the first of his Twelve Labors. First, he attempted to shoot arrows at it, then he used his great club, and was eventually forced to strangle the beast. He would then use the Lion's own claws to skin it, whereupon he wore its invulnerable hide as armor.
- Cerberus, another one of Typhon's sons was a three-headed dog that was employed by Hades as the guardian of the passage way to and from the Underworld. According to Hesiod, he was the son of Orthrus and Echidna.
- Ladon was a serpentine dragon, known as a drakon. According to Hesiod, Ladon was the son of Phorcys and Ceto, instead of Typhon and Echidna. Regardless of his parentage, Ladon entwined himself around the tree in the Garden of the Hesperides at the behest of Hera, who appointed him the garden's guardian. He was eventually killed by Heracles.
- The Lernaean Hydra, another one of Typhon's daughters, terrorized a spring at the lake of Lerna, near Argos, slaying anyone and anything that approached her lair with her noxious venom, save for a monstrous crab that was her companion. She was originally thought to have nine heads, and any neck, if severed, would give rise to two more heads, her ninth head was immortal. She and her crab were slain by Heracles as the second of his Twelve Labors - he cut off her heads and burnt the neck so that she could not regenerate, and crushed her ninth head under a rock, (the crab being accidentally crushed underneath Heracles' heel).
- Typhon's last child was his daughter, Chimera. Chimera resembled a tremendous, fire-breathing lioness with a goat's head emerging from the middle of her back, and had a snake for a tail. She roamed the ancient kingdom of Lycia, particularly around *Mount Chimaera* (possibly near Yanartaş), bringing bad omens and destruction in her wake, until she was slain by Bellerophon and Pegasus at the behest of Iobates.

Battle with Zeus

Typhon started destroying cities and hurling mountains in a fit of rage. All of the gods of Olympus fled to their home. Only Zeus stood firm, and the battle raged, ending when Zeus threw Mount Etna on top of Typhon, trapping him.

The inveterate enemy of the Olympian gods is described in detail by Hesiod^[3] as a vast grisly monster with a hundred serpent heads "with dark flickering tongues" flashing fire from their eyes and a din of voices and a hundred serpents legs, a feature shared by many primal monsters of Greek myth that extend in serpentine or scaly coils from the waist down. The titanic struggle created earthquakes and tsunamis.^[4] Once conquered by Zeus' thunderbolts, Typhon was cast into Tartarus, the common destiny of many such archaic adversaries, or he was confined beneath Mount Aetna (Pindar, *Pythian Ode* 1.19–20; Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 370), where "his bed scratches and goads the whole length of his back stretched out against it", or in other volcanic regions, where he is the cause of eruptions. Typhon is thus the chthonic figuration of volcanic forces, as Hephaestus (Roman Vulcan) is their "civilized" Olympian manifestation.

Typhon is also the father of hot dangerous storm winds which issue forth from the stormy pit of Tartarus, according to Hesiod. Likewise, the rumblings of Typhon emitted from deepest Tartarus could be clearly heard within the underground torrent near Seleuceia, now in Turkey, until his presence was neutralized by the building of a Byzantine church nearby.^[5]

Origin of name

Typhon may be derived from the Greek τυφειν (typhein), to smoke, hence it is considered to be a possible etymology for the word *typhoon*, supposedly borrowed by the Persians (as طوفان *Tufân*) and Arabs to describe the cyclonic storms of the Indian Ocean. The Greeks also frequently represented him as a storm-demon, especially in the version where he stole Zeus's thunderbolts and wrecked the earth with storms (cf. Hesiod, *Theogony*; Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*).

Related concepts and myths

Since Herodotus, Typhon has been identified by some scholars with the Egyptian Set. In the Orphic tradition, Typhon leads the Titans when they attack and kill Dionysus, just as Set is responsible for the murder of Osiris. Furthermore, the slaying of Typhon by Zeus bears similarities to the killing of Vritra by Indra^[6] (a deity also associated with lightning and storms), and possibly the two stories are ultimately derived from a common Indo-European source. Similarities can be found in the battle between Thor and Jormungand from Norse myths, as well as (perhaps) an incident in the Irish Metrical Dindsenchas in which the Dagda fights a giant octopus.^[7] Mythologist Joseph Campbell also makes parallels to the slaying of Leviathan by YHWH, about which YHWH boasts to Job.^[8]

Comparisons can also be drawn with the Mesopotamian monster Tiamat and its slaying by Babylonian chief god Marduk. The similarities between the Greek myth and its earlier Mesopotamian counterpart do not seem to be merely accidental. A number of west Semitic (Ras Shamra) and Hittite sources appear to corroborate the theory of a genetic relationship between the two myths.^[9]

Popular culture

- Typhon was referenced in Dante Alighieri's *Inferno*. He is mentioned to be among the biblical and mythological giants that are frozen onto the rings outside of Hell's Circle of Treachery. Dante and Virgil threatened to go to Tityos and Typhon if Antaeus doesn't lower them into the Circle of Treachery.
- Typhon was featured in *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys* portrayed by Glenn Shadix. He is portrayed as a giant who was trapped in a rock by Hera so that she can use Echidna's children in her plots. Hercules managed to free Typhon and reunite him with Echidna.
- Typhon appeared in "The Last Olympian" by Rick Riordan. He exploded out of the mountain and mortals thought he was a freak storm. Eventually he was subdued, with the help of Poseidon and an army of Cyclopes. He was captured before he had the chance to make it to Olympus, saving the gods from destruction.
- Typhon is a summon monster in the Final Fantasy series of video games, first appearing in Final Fantasy VI (originally mistranslated as "Chupon" by Ted Woosley in the North American Final Fantasy III for SNES).
- Typhon is the final boss in the hack-and-slash game Titan Quest.
- Typhon is one of the gods or superhumans in Roger Zelazny's *Creatures of Light and Darkness*, where he appears with and is related to various Egyptian deities.
- Typhon is the final boss in the greek levels in the game Age of Empires: Mythologies for the Nintendo DS
- Typhon appeared in *Hercules: The Animated Series*, where he was voiced by Regis Philbin. He is freed of his imprisonment in the midst of a battle between Hercules and Echidna during Titan Smashing Day, a holiday commemorating his defeat by Zeus. It is revealed Zeus had Hera's help in the battle and it is Hera's intervention once again that leads the two monsters to retreat.

Notes

- [1] W. Porzig, "Illuyankas und Typhon", *Kleinasiatische Forschung* 1.3 (1930) pp 379–86
- [2] *Iliad* ix.664
- [3] *Theogony* 820–868
- [4] "The whole earth seethed, and sky and sea: and the long waves raged along the beaches round and about, at the rush of the deathless gods: and there arose an endless shaking." (Hesiod, *Theogony*.)
- [5] Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, p.41
- [6] Let me now sing the heroic deeds of Indra, the first that the thunderbolt-wielder performed. He killed the dragon and pierced an opening for the waters; he split open the bellies of mountains. (*Rig Veda* 1.32.1)
- [7] <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T106500D/text099.html>
- [8] *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology*, Joseph Campbell; P.22.
- [9] Jean-Pierre Vernant, *The Origins of Greek Thought*. Cornell University Press, 1982. <http://books.google.fr/books?id=KktoPGN4JaoC>


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External links

- Typhoeus at Theoi (<http://www.theoi.com/Gigante/Typhoeus.html>) compiled sources of myth in classical literature
 - (<http://www.gods-heros-myth.com>)
-

Medusa

Medusa	
	
Medusa, by Caravaggio (1595)	
Consort	Poseidon
Parents	Phorcys and Ceto
Siblings	The Hesperides, Stheno, Euryale, The Graea, Thoosa, Scylla, and Ladon
Children	Pegasus and Chrysaor

In Greek mythology **Medusa** (Greek: Μέδουσα (Médousa), "guardian, protectress")^[1] was a monster, a Gorgon, generally described as having the face of a hideous human female with living venomous snakes in place of hair. Gazing directly upon her would turn onlookers to stone. Most sources describe her as the daughter of Phorcys and Ceto,^[2] though the author Hyginus (*Fabulae*, 151) interposes a generation and gives Medusa another chthonic pair as parents.^[3]

Medusa was beheaded by the hero Perseus, who thereafter used her head as a weapon^[4] until he gave it to the goddess Athena to place on her shield. In classical antiquity the image of the head of Medusa appeared in the evil-averting device known as the *Gorgoneion*.

Medusa in classical mythology



Perseus with the Head of Medusa, by Benvenuto Cellini, installed 1554

The three Gorgon sisters—Medusa, Stheno, and Euryale—were all children of the ancient marine deities Phorcys (or Phorkys) and his sister Ceto (or Keto), chthonic monsters from an archaic world. Their genealogy is shared with other sisters, the Graeae, as in Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*, which places both trinities of sisters far off "on Kisthene's dreadful plain":

Near them their sisters three, the Gorgons, winged
With snakes for hair— hated of mortal man—

While ancient Greek vase-painters and relief carvers imagined Medusa and her sisters as beings born of monstrous form, sculptors and vase-painters of the fifth century began to envisage her as being beautiful as well as terrifying. In an ode written in 490 BC Pindar already speaks of "fair-cheeked Medusa".^[5]

In a late version of the Medusa myth, related by the Roman poet Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 4.770), Medusa was originally a ravishingly beautiful maiden, "the jealous aspiration of many suitors," priestess in Athena's temple, but when she was caught being raped by the "Lord of the Sea"

Poseidon in Athena's temple, the enraged Athena transformed Medusa's beautiful hair to serpents and made her face so terrible to behold that the mere sight of it would turn onlookers to stone. In Ovid's telling, Perseus describes Medusa's punishment by Minerva (Athena) as just and well earned.

Death

In most versions of the story, she was beheaded by the hero Perseus, who was sent to fetch her head by King Polydectes of Seriphus. In his conquest, he received a mirrored shield from Athena, gold, winged sandals from Hermes, a sword from Hephaestus and Hades' helm of invisibility. Medusa was the only one of the three Gorgons who was mortal, so Perseus was able to slay her while looking at the reflection from the mirrored shield he received from Athena. During that time, Medusa was pregnant by Poseidon. When Perseus beheaded her, Pegasus, a winged horse, and Chrysaor, a golden sword-wielding giant, sprang from her body.

Jane Ellen Harrison argues that "her potency only begins when her head is severed, and that potency resides in the head; she is in a word a mask with a body later appended... the basis of the Gorgoneion is a cultus object, a ritual mask misunderstood."^[6]

In the *Odyssey* xi, Homer does not specifically mention the Gorgon Medusa:

Lest for my daring Persephone the dread,
From Hades should send up an awful monster's grisly head.

Harrison's translation states "the Gorgon was made out of the terror, not the terror out of the Gorgon."^[6]

According to Ovid, in northwest Africa, Perseus flew past the Titan Atlas, who stood holding the sky aloft, and transformed him into stone when he tried to attack him.^[7] In a similar manner, the corals of the Red Sea were said to have been formed of Medusa's blood spilled onto seaweed when Perseus laid down the petrifying head beside the shore during his short stay in Ethiopia where he saved and wed his future wife, the lovely princess Andromeda. Furthermore the poisonous vipers of the Sahara, in the *Argonautica* 4.1515, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 4.770 and Lucan's *Pharsalia* 9.820, were said to have grown from spilt drops of her blood. The blood of Medusa also spawned the Amphisbaena (a horned dragon-like creature with a snake-headed tail).

Perseus then flew to Seriphos, where his mother was about to be forced into marriage with the king. King Polydectes was turned into stone by the gaze of Medusa's head. Then Perseus gave the Gorgon's head to Athena, who placed it on her shield, the Aegis.^[8]

Some classical references refer to three Gorgons; Harrison considered that the tripling of Medusa into a trio of sisters was a secondary feature in the myth:

The triple form is not primitive, it is merely an instance of a general tendency... which makes of each woman goddess a trinity, which has given us the Horae, the Charites, the Semnai, and a host of other triple groups. It is immediately obvious that the Gorgons are not really three but one + two. The two unslain sisters are mere appendages due to custom; the real Gorgon is Medusa.^[6]



Head of Medusa, gate of the Royal Palace of Turin

Modern interpretations

Psychoanalysis

In 1940, Sigmund Freud's *Das Medusenhaupt (Medusa's Head)* was published posthumously. This article laid the framework for his significant contribution to a body of criticism surrounding the monster. Medusa is presented as "the supreme talisman who provides the image of castration — associated in the child's mind with the discovery of maternal sexuality — and its denial."^[9] Psychoanalysis continues archetypal literary criticism to the present day: Beth Seelig analyzes Medusa's punishment from the aspect of the crime of having been raped rather than having willingly consented in Athena's temple as an outcome of the goddess' unresolved conflicts with her own father, Zeus.^[10]

Feminism

In the 20th century, feminists reassessed Medusa's appearances in literature and in modern culture, including the use of Medusa as a logo by fashion company Versace.^{[11][12][13]} The name "Medusa" itself is often used in ways not directly connected to the mythological figure but to suggest the gorgon's abilities or to connote malevolence; despite her origins as a beauty, the name in common usage "came to mean monster."^[14] The book *Female Rage: Unlocking Its Secrets, Claiming Its Power* by Mary Valentis and Anne Devane notes that "When we asked women what female rage looks like to them, it was always Medusa, the snaky-haired monster of myth, who came to mind ... In one interview after another we were told that Medusa is 'the most horrific woman in the world' ... [though] none of the women we interviewed could remember the details of the myth."^[15]

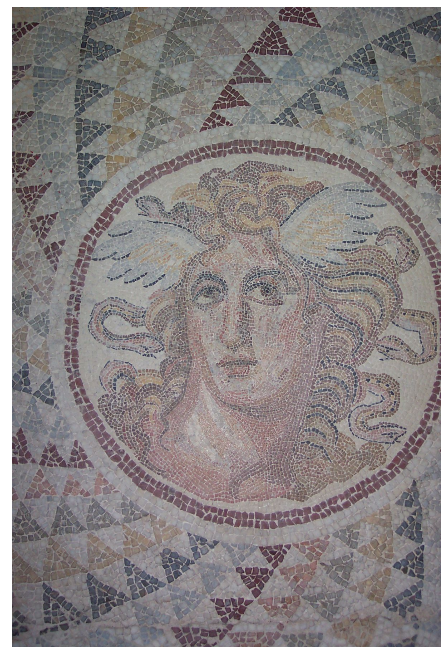
Medusa's visage has since been adopted by many women as a symbol of female rage; one of the first publications to express this idea was a 1978 issue of *Women: A Journal of Liberation*. The cover featured the image of a Gorgon, which the editors explained "can be a map to guide us through our terrors, through the depths of our anger into the sources of our power as women."^[15] In a 1986 article for *Women of Power* magazine called "Ancient Gorgons: A Face for Contemporary Women's Rage," Emily Erwin Culpepper wrote that "The Amazon Gorgon face is female fury personified. The Gorgon/Medusa image has been rapidly adopted by large numbers of feminists who recognize her as one face of our own rage."^[15]

Nihilism

Medusa has sometimes appeared as representing notions of scientific determinism and nihilism, especially in contrast with romantic idealism.^{[16][17]} In this interpretation of Medusa, attempts to avoid looking into her eyes represent avoiding the ostensibly depressing reality that the universe is meaningless. Jack London uses Medusa in this way in his novel *The Mutiny of the Elsinore*.^[18]



An archaic Medusa wearing the belt of the intertwined snakes, a fertility symbol, as depicted on the west pediment of the Artemis Temple in Corfu, exhibited at the Archaeological Museum of Corfu



Medusa mosaic (Roman period), National Archaeological Museum, Athens

I cannot help remembering a remark of De Casseres. It was over the wine in Mouquin's. Said he: "The profoundest instinct in man is to war against the truth; that is, against the Real. He shuns facts from his infancy. His life is a perpetual evasion. Miracle, chimera and to-morrow keep him alive. He lives on fiction and myth. It is the Lie that makes him free. Animals alone are given the privilege of lifting the veil of Isis; men dare not. The animal, awake, has no fictional escape from the Real because he has no imagination. Man, awake, is compelled to seek a perpetual escape into Hope, Belief, Fable, Art, God, Socialism, Immortality, Alcohol, Love. From Medusa-Truth he makes an appeal to Maya-Lie."

—Jack London, *The Mutiny of the Elsinore*

Medusa in art

From ancient times, the Medusa was immortalized in numerous works of art, including:

- Medusa on the breastplate of Alexander the Great, as depicted in the Alexander Mosaic from Pompeii's House of the Faun (c. 200 BC)
- Medusa column bases of Basilica Cistern in Constantinople.
- The "Rondanini Medusa", a Roman copy of the *Gorgoneion* on the aegis of Athena; later used as a model for the Gorgon's head in Antonio Canova's marble *Perseus with the Head of Medusa* (1798–1801)
- *Medusa* (oil on canvas) by Leonardo da Vinci
- *Perseus with the Head of Medusa* (bronze sculpture) by Benvenuto Cellini (1554)
- *Medusa* (oil on canvas) by Caravaggio (1597)
- *Head of Medusa*, by Peter Paul Rubens (1618)
- *Medusa* (marble bust) by Gianlorenzo Bernini (1630s)
- Medusa is played by a countertenor in Jean-Baptiste Lully and Philippe Quinault's opera, *Persée* (1682). She sings the aria "J'ay perdu la beauté qui me rendit si vaine."
- *Perseus Turning Phineus and his Followers to Stone* (oil on canvas) by Luca Giordano (early 1680s).
- *Perseus with the Head of Medusa* (marble sculpture) by Antonio Canova (1801)
- *Medusa* (oil on canvas) by Arnold Böcklin (c. 1878)
- *Perseus* (bronze sculpture) by Salvador Dalí

Medusa remained a common theme in art in the nineteenth century, when her myth was retold in Thomas Bulfinch's *Mythology*. Edward Burne-Jones' Perseus Cycle of paintings and a drawing by Aubrey Beardsley gave way to the twentieth century works of Paul Klee, John Singer Sargent, Pablo Picasso, Pierre et Gilles, and Auguste Rodin's bronze sculpture *The Gates of Hell*.^[19]



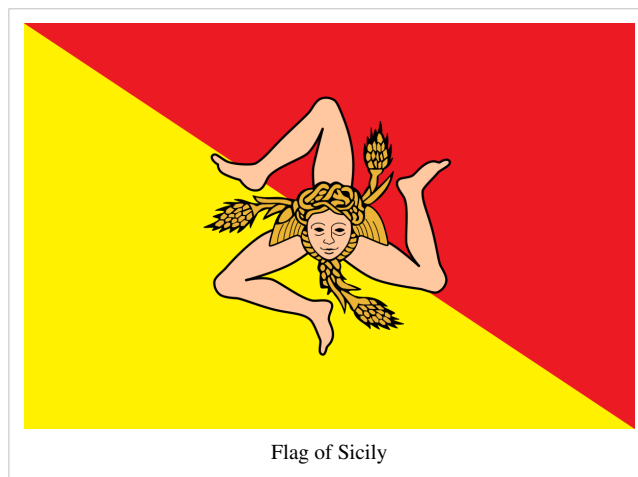
Tête de Méduse, by Peter Paul Rubens (1618)



Medusa by Arnold Böcklin, circa 1878

In flags and emblems

The head of Medusa is featured on some regional symbols. One example is that of the flag and emblem of Sicily, together with the three legged *trinaeria*. The inclusion of Medusa in the center implies the protection of the goddess Athena, who wore the Gorgon's likeness on her aegis, as said above. Another example is the coat of arms of Dohalice village in the Czech Republic.



In popular culture

The petrifying image of Medusa makes an instantly recognizable feature in popular culture. Medusa has been featured in several works of fiction, including video games, movies and books. In particular, the designer Gianni Versace's symbol is reflected through the Medusa-head symbol. It was chosen because she represents beauty, art, and philosophy.^[20]

Notes and references

- [1] Probably the feminine present participle of *medein*, "to protect, rule over" (*American Heritage Dictionary*; compare Medon, Medea, Diomedes, etc.). If not, it is from the same root, and is formed after the participle. *OED* 2001 revision, s.v.; *medein* (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0057:entry=#65585>) in LSJ.
- [2] as in Hesiod, *Theogony* 270, and Pseudo-Apollodorus *Bibliothēke*, 1.10.
- [3] "from Typhon the giant and Echidna were born Gorgon... Medusa daughter of Gorgon and Neptunus..."
- [4] Bullfinch, Thomas. "Bullfinch Mythology – Age of Fable – Stories of Gods & Heroes" (<http://classicalit.about.com/library/bl-etexts/tbullfinch/bl-tbullfinch-age-15.htm>). . Retrieved 2007-09-07. "...and turning his face away, he held up the Gorgon's head. Atlas, with all his bulk, was changed into stone."
- [5] (Pythian Ode 12). Noted by Marjorie J. Milne in discussing a red-figured vase in the style of Polygnotos, ca. 450–30 BC, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Milne noted that "It is one of the earliest illustrations of the story to show the Gorgon not as a hideous monster but as a beautiful woman. Art in this respect lagged behind poetry." (Marjorie J. Milne, "Perseus and Medusa on an Attic Vase" *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* New Series, 4.5 (January 1946, pp. 126–130) 126.p.)
- [6] Harrison, p. 187.
- [7] Roger Lancelyn Green suggests in his *Tales of the Greek Heroes* written for children that Athena used the aegis against Atlas.
- [8] Smith, "Perseus".
- [9] *Das Medusenhaupt (Medusa's Head)*. First published posthumously. *Int. Z. Psychoanal. Imago*, 25 (1940), 105; reprinted Ges. W., 17.47. The manuscript is dated May 14, 1922, and appears to be a sketch for a more extensive work. Translation, reprinted from *Int. J. Psychoanal.*, 22 (1941), 69; by James Strachey.
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- [15] Wilk, pp. 217–218.
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- [18] London, p. 121.
- [19] Wilk, p. 200.
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External links

- Ancient coins depicting Medusa (<http://rg.ancients.info/medusa/>)
- "Medusa in Myth and Literary History" – English.uiuc.edu (http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/a_f/bogan/medusamyth.htm)
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Minotaur

Minotaur



Minotaur bust, (National Archaeological Museum of Athens)

Mythology	Greek
Grouping	mythological creature
Parents	Cretan Bull and Pasiphaë
Region	Crete

In Greek mythology, the **Minotaur** (Ancient Greek: Μινώταυρος Greek pronunciation: [miːnɔ̌ːtaʊros], Latin: *Minotaurus*, Etruscan *Θevrumineś*), was a creature with the head of a bull on the body of a man^[1] or, as described by Roman poet Ovid, "part man and part bull".^[2] He dwelt at the center of the Cretan Labyrinth, which was an elaborate maze-like construction^[3] designed by the architect Daedalus and his son Icarus, on the command of King Minos of Crete. The Minotaur was eventually killed by the Athenian hero Theseus.

The term Minotaur derives from the Ancient Greek Μινώταυρος, a compound of the name Μίνως (Minos) and the noun ταύρος "bull", translated as "(the) Bull of Minos". In Crete, the Minotaur was known by its proper name, Asterion,^[4] a name shared with Minos' foster-father.^[5]

"Minotaur" was originally a proper noun in reference to this mythical figure. The use of "minotaur" as a common noun to refer to members of a generic race of bull-headed creatures developed much later, in 20th-century fantasy genre fiction.

Birth and appearance



The bronze "Horned God" from Enkomi, Cyprus

After he ascended the throne of Crete, Minos competed with his brothers to rule. Minos prayed to Poseidon to send him a snow-white bull, as a sign of support. He was to kill the bull to show honor to Poseidon but decided to keep it instead because of its beauty. He thought Poseidon would not care if he kept the white bull and sacrificed one of his own. To punish Minos, Aphrodite made Pasiphaë, Minos' wife, fall deeply in love with the bull from the sea, the Cretan Bull.^[6] Pasiphaë had the archetypal craftsman Daedalus make a hollow wooden cow, and climbed inside it in order to "mate" with the white bull. The offspring was the monstrous Minotaur. Pasiphaë nursed him in his infancy, but he grew and became ferocious, being the unnatural offspring of man and beast, he had no natural source of nourishment and thus devoured man for sustenance. Minos, after getting advice from the oracle at Delphi, had Daedalus construct a gigantic labyrinth to hold the Minotaur. Its location was near Minos' palace in Knossos.

Nowhere has the essence of the myth been expressed more succinctly than in the *Heroides* attributed to Ovid, where Pasiphaë's daughter complains of the curse of

her unrequited love: "the bull's form disguised the god, Pasiphaë, my mother, a victim of the deluded bull, brought forth in travail her reproach and burden."^[7] Literalist and prurient readings that emphasize the machinery of actual copulation may, perhaps intentionally, obscure the mystic marriage of the god in bull form, a Minoan *mythos* alien to the Greeks.^[8]

The Minotaur is commonly represented in Classical art with the body of a man and the head and tail of a bull. One of the figurations assumed by the river god Achelous in wooing Deianira is as a man with the head of a bull, according to Sophocles' *Trachiniae*.

From Classical times through the Renaissance, the Minotaur appears at the center of many depictions of the Labyrinth.^[9] Ovid's Latin account of the Minotaur, which did not elaborate on which half was bull and which half man, was the most widely available during the Middle Ages, and several later versions show the reverse of the Classical configuration, a man's head and torso on a bull's body, reminiscent of a centaur.^[10] This alternative tradition survived into the Renaissance, and still figures in some modern depictions, such as Steele Savage's illustrations for Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* (1942).

Theseus and the Minotaur



Rhyton in the shape of a bull's head, Heraklion Archaeological Museum; shown here at the Greek pavilion at Expo '88

Androgeus, son of Minos, had been killed by the Athenians, who were jealous of the victories he had won at the Panathenaic festival. Others say he was killed at Marathon by the Cretan bull, his mother's former taurine lover, which Aegeus, king of Athens, had commanded him to slay. The common tradition is that Minos waged war to avenge the death of his son and won. Catullus, in his account of the Minotaur's birth,^[11] refers to another version in which Athens was "compelled by the cruel plague to pay penalties for the killing of Androgeos." Aegeus must avert the plague caused by his crime by sending "young men at the same time as the best of unwed girls as a feast" to the Minotaur. Minos required that seven Athenian youths and seven maidens, drawn by lots, be sent every seventh or ninth year (some accounts say every year^[12]) to be devoured by the Minotaur.

When the third sacrifice approached, Theseus volunteered to slay the monster. He promised to his father, Aegeus, that he would put up a white sail on his journey back home if he was successful and would have the crew put up black sails if he was killed. In Crete, both Minos' daughters, Ariadne and Phaedra fell madly in love with Theseus.

Ariadne, the elder, helped him navigate the labyrinth. In most accounts she gave him a ball of thread, allowing him to retrace his path. Theseus killed the Minotaur with the sword of Aegeus and led the other Athenians back out of the labyrinth. On the way home, Theseus abandoned Ariadne on the island of Naxos, and continued with Phaedra, his future wife. He neglected, however, to put up the white sail. King Aegeus, from his lookout on Cape Sounion, saw the black-sailed ship approach and, presuming his son dead, committed suicide by throwing himself into the sea that is since named after him.^[13] This act secured the throne for Theseus.

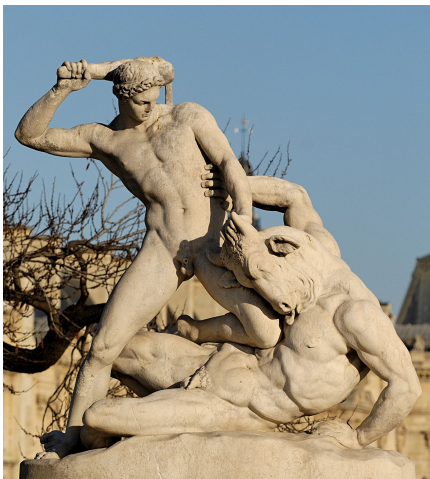
Etruscan view

This essentially Athenian view of the Minotaur as the antagonist of Theseus reflects the literary sources, which are biased in favour of Athenian perspectives. The Etruscans, who paired Ariadne with Dionysus, never with Theseus, offered an alternative Etruscan view of the Minotaur, never seen in Greek arts: on an Etruscan red-figure wine-cup of the early-to-mid fourth century Pasiphaë tenderly cradles an infant Minotaur on her knee.^[14]



Pasiphaë and the Minotaur, Attic red-figure kylix found at Etruscan Vulci (Cabinet des Médailles, Paris)

Interpretations



Theseus fighting the Minotaur by Jean-Etienne Ramey, marble, 1826, Tuileries Gardens, Paris

The contest between Theseus and the Minotaur was frequently represented in Greek art. A Knossian didrachm exhibits on one side the labyrinth, on the other the Minotaur surrounded by a semicircle of small balls, probably intended for stars; one of the monster's names was Asterion ("star").

The ruins of Minos' palace at Knossos have been found, but the labyrinth has not. The enormous number of rooms, staircases and corridors in the palace has led some archaeologists to suggest that the palace itself was the source of the labyrinth myth, an idea generally discredited today.^[15] Homer, describing the shield of Achilles, remarked that the labyrinth was Ariadne's ceremonial dancing ground.

Some modern mythologists regard the Minotaur as a solar personification and a Minoan adaptation of the Baal-Moloch of the Phoenicians. The slaying of the Minotaur by Theseus in that case indicates the breaking of Athenian tributary relations with Minoan

Crete.

According to A. B. Cook, *Minos* and *Minotaur* are only different forms of the same personage, representing the sun-god of the Cretans, who depicted the sun as a bull. He and J. G. Frazer both explain Pasiphaë's union with the bull as a sacred ceremony, at which the queen of Knossos was wedded to a bull-formed god, just as the wife of the Tyrant in Athens was wedded to Dionysus. E. Pottier, who does not dispute the historical personality of Minos, in view of the story of Phalaris, considers it probable that in Crete (where a bull-cult may have existed by the side of that of the labrys) victims were tortured by being shut up in the belly of a red-hot brazen bull. The story of Talos, the Cretan man of brass, who heated himself red-hot and clasped strangers in his embrace as soon as they landed on the island, is probably of similar origin.



The Minotaur in the Labyrinth, engraving of a 16th-century CE gem in the Medici Collection in the Palazzo Strozzi, Florence^[16]

A historical explanation of the myth refers to the time when Crete was the main political and cultural potency in the Aegean Sea. As the fledgling Athens (and probably other continental Greek cities) was under tribute to Crete, it can be assumed that such tribute included young men and women for sacrifice. This ceremony was performed by a priest disguised with a bull head or mask, thus explaining the imagery of the Minotaur. It may also be that this priest was son to Minos.

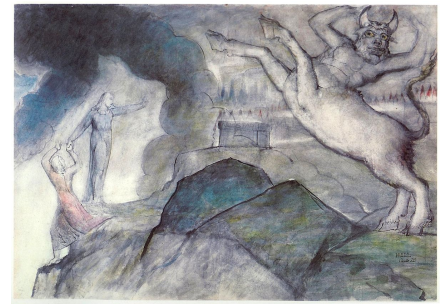
Once continental Greece was free from Crete's dominance, the myth of the Minotaur worked to distance the forming religious consciousness of the Hellene *poleis* from Minoan beliefs.

The Minotaur in Dante's *Inferno*

The Minotaur (*infamia di Creti*, "infamy of Crete"), appears briefly in Dante's *Inferno*, in Canto 12 (l. 12-13, 16-21), where Dante and Virgil find themselves picking their way among boulders dislodged on the slope, and preparing to enter into the Seventh Circle.^[17]

Dante and Virgil, his guide, encounter the beast first among those damned for their violent natures, the "men of blood". In reversal to the Greek myth and classical tradition, many commentators believe that Dante bestowed the beast with a man's head upon a bull's body.^[18]

Inferno XII, Lines 16-21.



William Blake's image of the Minotaur to illustrate *Inferno* XII

From the *Inferno*

Lo savio mio inver' lui grido: "Forse
tu credi che qui sia 'l duca d'Atene,
che sú nel mondo la morte ti porse?
Pártiti, bestia, ché questi non vene
ammaestrato da la tua sorella,
ma vassi per veder la vostre pene."

English translation:

"My sage cried out to him: "You think,
perhaps, this is the Duke of Athens,
who in the world put you to death.
"Get away, you beast, for this man
does not come tutored by your sister
he comes to view your punishments."

The above lines are of Virgil taunting the Minotaur in order to distract him, and reminding the Minotaur that he was killed by Theseus the Duke of Athens, and instructed by the monster's "sister" Ariadne. The Minotaur is also the first infernal guardian whom Virgil and Dante come across within the walls of Dis (the fallen angels, Erinyes [Furies], and the unseen Medusa were located on the city's defensive ramparts in Canto IX). The Minotaur seems to represent the entire zone of Violence similar to how Geryon represents Fraud in Canto XVI, and holds a similar role in that he is the gatekeeper for the entire seventh Circle.^[19]

Giovanni Boccaccio's makes this comparison in his literary commentary of the *Commedia*, he states, "When he had grown up and become a most ferocious animal, and of incredible strength, they tell that Minos had him shut up in a prison called the labyrinth, and that he had sent to him there all those whom he wanted to die a cruel death".^[20] Whereas Dante Gabriel Rossetti, in his own commentary^{[21][22]} compares the Minotaur with all three sins of violence within the seventh circle: "The Minotaur, who is situated at the rim of the tripartite circle, fed, according to the poem was biting himself (violence against oneself) and was conceived in the 'false cow' (violence against nature, daughter of God)."

After the taunting, Virgil and Dante pass quickly by to the centaurs, (Nessus, Chiron, Pholus, and Nessus) who guard the Fleggetonte, "river of blood", to continue through the seventh Circle.^[23]

This unusual association of the Minotaur with Centaurs, not made in any Classical source, is shown visually in William Blake's rendering of the Minotaur (*illustration*) as a kind of taurine centaur himself.

References

- Minotaur in Greek Myth ^[24] source Greek texts and art.

Notes

- [1] "Minotaur" (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Minotaur>) at dictionary.reference.com
- [2] *semibovemque virum semivirumque bovem*, according to Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 2.24, one of the three lines that his friends would have deleted from his work, and one of the three that he, selecting independently, would preserve at all cost, in the apocryphal anecdote told by Albinovanus Pedo. (noted by J. S. Rusten, "Ovid, Empedocles and the Minotaur" *The American Journal of Philology* **103.3** (Autumn 1982, pp. 332-333) p. 332.
- [3] Labyrinth patterns as painted or inscribed do not have dead ends like a maze; instead, a single path winds to the center, where, with a single turn, the alternate path leads out again. See Kern, *Through the Labyrinth*, Prestel, 2000, Chapter 1, and Doob, *The Idea of the Labyrinth*, Cornell University Press, 1990, Chapter 2.
- [4] Pausanias, Description of Greece 2. 31. 1
- [5] The Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* fr. 140, says of Zeus' establishment of Europa in Crete: "...he made her live with Asterion the king of the Cretans. There she conceived and bore three sons, Minos, Sarpedon and Rhadamanthys."
- [6] In Greek mythology, the Cretan Bull was equally the bull that carried away Europa.
- [7] Walter Burkert notes the fragment of Euripides' *The Cretans* (C. Austin's frs. 78-82) as the "authoritative version" for the Hellenes.
- [8] See R.F. Willetts, *Cretan Cults and Festivals* (London, 1962); Pasiphaë's union with the bull has been recognized as a mystical union for over a century: F. B. Jevons ("Report on Greek Mythology" *Folklore* **2.2** [June 1891:220-241] p. 226) notes of Europa and Pasiphaë, "The kernel of both myths is the union of the moon-spirit (in human shape) with a bull; both myths, then, have to do with a sacred marriage."
- [9] Several examples are shown in Kern, *Through the Labyrinth*, Prestel, 2000.
- [10] Examples include illustrations 204, 237, 238, and 371 in Kern. *op. cit.*
- [11] Carmen 64 (<http://rudy.negenborn.net/catullus/text2/e64.htm>).
- [12] Servius on *Aeneid*, 6. 14: *singulis quibusque annis* "every one year". The annual period is given by J. E. Zimmerman, *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*, Harper & Row, 1964, article "Androgeus"; and H. J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology*, Dutton, 1959, p. 265. Zimmerman cites Virgil, Apollodorus, and Pausanias. The nine-year period appears in Plutarch and Ovid.
- [13] Plutarch, *Theseus*, 15—19; Diodorus Siculus i. I6, iv. 61; *Bibliothèque* iii. 1,15
- [14] The wine cup is illustrated in Larissa Bonfante and Judith Swaddling, *Etruscan Mythology* (Series The Legendary Past, British Museum / University of Texas) 2006, fig.29 p. 44 ("early fourth century") (on-line illustration (<http://bama.ua.edu/~ksummers/cl222/LECT14/sld029.htm>)).
- [15] Sir Arthur Evans, the first of many archaeologists who have worked at Knossos, is often given credit for this idea, but he did not himself believe it; see David McCullough, *The Unending Mystery*, Pantheon, 2004, p. 34-36. Modern scholarship generally discounts the idea; see Kern, *Through the Labyrinth*, Prestel, 2000, p. 42-43, and Doob, *The Idea of the Labyrinth*, Cornell University Press, p. 1990, p. 25.
- [16] Paolo Alessandro Maffei, *Gemmae Antiche*, 1709, Pt. IV, pl. 31; Hermann Kern, *Through the Labyrinth*, Prestel, 2000, fig. 371, p. 202): Maffei "erroneously deemed the piece to be from Classical antiquity".
- [17] The traverse of this circle is a long one, filling Cantos 12 to 17.
- [18] Inferno XII Verse Translation by Dr. R. Hollander, p. 228 commentary
- [19] Boccaccio Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine commentary
- [20] Boccaccio's Expositions on Dante's Comedy University of Toronto Press, 30 Nov 2009
- [21] Bennett, Pre-Raphaelite Circle, 177-180.
- [22] Dante Family letters Rossetti Archive <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/pr5246.a43.vol2.rad.html>
- [23] Beck, Christopher, "Justice among the Centaurs," *Forum Italicum* 18 (1984): 217-29
- [24] <http://www.theoi.com/Ther/Minotauros.html>

Calydonian Boar

The **Calydonian Boar** is one of the monsters of Greek mythology that had to be overcome by heroes of the Olympian age. Sent by Artemis to ravage the region of Calydon in Aetolia because its king failed to honor her in his rites to the gods, it was killed in the **Calydonian Hunt**, in which many male heroes took part, but also a powerful woman, Atalanta, who won its hide by first wounding it with an arrow. This outraged some of the men, with tragic results. Strabo was under the impression that the Calydonian Boar was an offspring of the Crommyonian Sow vanquished by Theseus.^[2]



The Calydonian Hunt shown on a Roman frieze (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)^[1]

Importance in Greek mythology and art

The **Calydonian Boar** is one of the chthonic monsters in Greek mythology, each set in a specific locale. Sent by Artemis to ravage the region of Calydon in Aetolia, it met its end in the **Calydonian Hunt**, in which all the heroes of the new age pressed to take part, with the exception of Heracles, who vanquished his own Goddess-sent Erymanthian Boar separately. Since the mythic event drew together numerous heroes^[3]—among whom were many who were venerated as progenitors of their local ruling houses among tribal groups of Hellenes into Classical times—the Calydonian Boar hunt offered a natural subject in classical art, for it was redolent with the web of myth that gathered around its protagonists on other occasions, around their half-divine descent and their offspring. Like the quest for the Golden Fleece (*Argonautica*) or the Trojan War that took place the following generation, the Calydonian Hunt is one of the nodes in which much Greek myth comes together.



Tondo of a Laconian black-figure cup by the Naucratis Painter, ca. 555 BCE
(Louvre)

Both Homer^[4] and Hesiod and their listeners were aware of the details of this myth, but no surviving complete account exists: some papyrus fragments found at Oxyrhynchus are all that survive of Stesichorus' telling;^[5] the myth repertory called *Bibliothēke* ("The Library") contains the gist of the tale, and before that was compiled the Roman poet Ovid told the story in some colorful detail in his *Metamorphoses*.^[6]

Hunt

King Oeneus ("wine man") of Calydon, an ancient city of west-central Greece north of the Gulf of Patras, held annual harvest sacrifices to the gods on the sacred hill. One year the king forgot to include Great

"Artemis of the Golden Throne" in his offerings^[7] Insulted, Artemis, the "Lady of the Bow", loosed the biggest, most ferocious boar imaginable on the countryside of Calydon. It rampaged throughout the countryside, destroying vineyards and crops, forcing people to take refuge inside the city walls (Ovid), where they began to starve.

Oeneus sent messengers out to look for the best hunters in Greece, offering them the boar's pelt and tusks as a prize.^[8]

Among those who responded were some of the Argonauts, Oeneus' own son Meleager, and, remarkably for the Hunt's eventual success, one woman—the huntress Atalanta, the "indomitable", who had been suckled by Artemis as a she-bear and raised as a huntress, a proxy for Artemis herself (Kerenyi; Ruck and Staples). Artemis appears to have been divided in her motives, for it was also said that she

had sent the young huntress because she knew her presence would be a source of division, and so it was: many of the men, led by Kepheus and Ankaïos, refused to hunt alongside a woman. It was the smitten Meleager who convinced them.^[9] Nonetheless it was Atalanta who first succeeded in wounding the boar with an arrow,



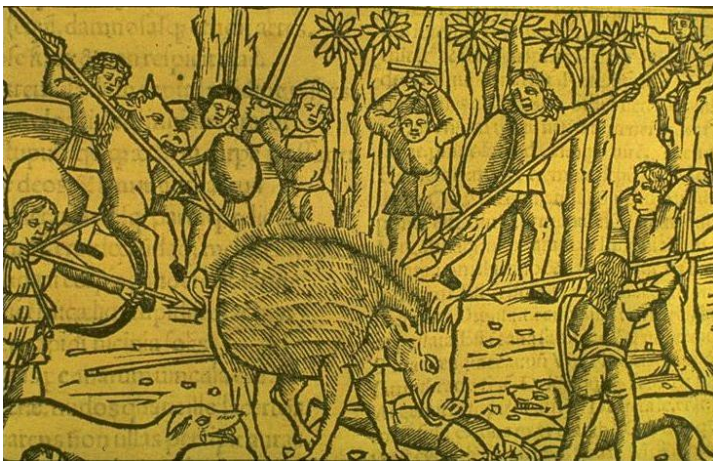
Roman marble sarcophagus from Vicovaro, carved with the Calydonian Hunt (Palazzo dei Conservatori, Rome)

although Meleager finished it off, and offered the prize to Atalanta, who had drawn first blood. But the sons of Thestios, who considered it disgraceful that a woman should get the trophy where men were involved, took the skin from her, saying that it was properly theirs by right of birth, if Meleagros chose not to accept it. Outraged by this,^[10] Meleagros slew the sons of Thestios and again gave the skin to Atalanta (*Bibliothèque*). Meleager's mother, sister of Meleager's slain uncles, took the fatal brand from

the chest where she had kept it (see Meleager) and threw it once more on the fire; as it was consumed, Meleager died on the spot, as the Fates had foretold. Thus Artemis achieved her revenge against King Oeneus.



Meleager et Atalanta, after Giulio Romano.



Woodcut illustration for Raphael Regius's edition of *Metamorphoses*, Venice, ca. 1518

During the hunt, Peleus accidentally killed his host Eurytion. In the course of the hunt and its aftermath, many of the hunters turned upon one another, contesting the spoils, and so the Goddess continued to be revenged (Kerenyi, 114): "But the goddess again made a great stir of anger and crying battle, over the head of the boar and the bristling boar's hide, between Kouretes and the high-hearted Aitolians" (Homer, *Iliad*, ix.543).

The boar's hide that was preserved in the Temple of Athena Alae at Tegea in Laconia was reputedly that of the Calydonian Boar,

"rotted by age and by now altogether without bristles" by the time Pausanias saw it in the second century CE. He noted that the tusks had been taken to Rome as booty from the defeated allies of Mark Anthony by Augustus; "one of the tusks of the Calydonian boar has been broken", Pausanias reports, "but the remaining one, having a circumference of about half a fathom,^[11] was dedicated in the Emperor's gardens, in a shrine of Dionysos".^[12] The Calydonian Hunt was the theme of the temple's main pediment.

Hunters

The heroes who participated assembled from all over Hellas, according to Homer;^[13] Bacchylides called them "the best of the Hellenes".^[14]

The table lists:

- Those seen by Pausanias on the Temple of Athena Alea at Tegea.
- Those listed by Latin mythographer Hyginus (*Fabulae* 30); they include Deucalion, whose connection is unlikely.
- Those noted in Ovid's list from the 8th Book of his *Metamorphoses*.

Hero	Pausanias	Hyginus	Ovid	Notes
Acastus			✓	"a splendid javelin- thrower" (Ovid, VIII, 306).
Admetus	✓		✓	the son of Pheres, from Pherae
Alcon	✓		✓	one of three sons of Hippocoon or Ares from Amykles in Thrace
Amphiaraus		✓	✓	the son of Oicles, from Argos; "As yet unruined by his wicked wife", i. e. Eriphyle (Ovid).
Ancaeus	✓	✓	✓	"from Parrhasia" (Ovid), son of Lycurgus, killed by the boar. In Ovid's account Ancaeus wielded a two-headed axe but he was undone by his boastfulness which gave the boar time enough to charge him: Ancaeus was speared on the boar's tusks at the upper part of the groin and guts burst forth from the gashes it had made.
Asclepius		✓		son of Apollo
Atalanta	✓	✓	✓	called <i>Tegeaea</i> ("of Tegea") by Ovid, the daughter of Skoineus, from Arcadia
Caeneus	✓		✓	son of Elatus; Ovid notes that Caeneus was "now no longer a woman" (VIII, 305).
Castor and Pollux	✓	✓	✓	the Dioscuri, sons of Zeus and Leda, from Lacedaemon
Cepheus, from Arcadia				
Cteatus			✓	brother of Eurytus, son of Actor.
Deucalion, son of Minos		✓		
Dryas of Calydon	✓		✓	son of Ares (Hyginus notes him as "son of Iapetus")
Echion	✓		✓	son of Mercurius (Hermes); Ovid says "the first spear ... was launched from Echion's shoulder." (VIII, 345).
Enaesimus	✓		✓	one of three sons of Hippocoon or Ares from Amykles in Thrace
Epochus	✓			
Euphemus		✓		son of Poseidon
Eurypylus				
Eurytion			✓	accidentally run through with the javelin of Peleus
Eurytus		✓		son of Mercurius (Hermes)
Hippasus, son of Eurytus	✓		✓	
Hippothous	✓	✓	✓	the son of Kerkyon, son of Agamedes, son of Stymphalos
Hyleus			✓	killed by the boar
Iason	✓		✓	Aeson's son, from Iolkos
Idas	✓		✓	and Lynceus, sons of Aphareus, from Messene

Iolaus	√	√	√	son of Iphicles, nephew of Heracles
Iphicles				the twin of Heracles, who took no part, Amphytryon's mortal son, from Thebes
Kometes and Prothous	√		√	the sons of Thestios, Meleager's uncles
Laertes			√	son of Arcesius, Odysseus' father
Lelex			√	of Naryx in Locria
Leucippus	√		√	one of three sons of Hippocoon or Ares from Amykles in Thrace
Lynceus and Idas	√		√	
Meleager	√	√	√	son of Oineus
the Moliones or Actorides			√	
Mopsus	√		√	son of Ampycus
Nestor			√	"Still in his prime" Ovid says.
Panopeus			√	
Peleus	√	√	√	son of Aiakos, father of Achilles from Phthia
Phoenix	√		√	son of Amyntor
Phyleus			√	from Elis
Pirithous		√	√	son of Ixion, from Larissa, the friend of Theseus
Plexippus	√		√	brother of Toxeus, slain by Meleager
Polydeuces	√	√	√	
Prothous and Kometes		√	√	the sons of Thestios, Meleager's uncles
Telamon	√	√	√	son of Aeacus
Theseus of Athens	√	√	√	faced another dangerous chthonic creature, the dusky wild Crommyonian Sow, on a separate occasion. Strabo (Geography 8.6.22) reckoned she was the mother of the Calydonian Boar, but there are no hints within the myths to link the two and suggest Strabo might have been right.
Toxeus			√	brother of Plexippus, slain by Meleager

The states which sent help to Oeneus

- Ternerdos, Iolcos, Sparta, Pleurone, Messene, Perrhaebia, Phthia, Magnesia, Salamin, Calydon, Thessalia, Oechialia, Ithaca, Tegea, Crete, Dolopia, Athens, [Magnesia], and Arcadia.(Hyginus, *Fabulae* 173A)

Notes

- [1] Ex-collection the textiles merchant Sir Francis Cook, assembled in Victorian times at Doughty House, in Richmond, south-west London.
- [2] Strabo, *Geography* viii.6.22
- [3] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliothēke* 1.8.2
- [4] Phoinix's long digression on Meleager and the war before Calydon embodies many parallels with the War of Troy: they are identified and analyzed by S. C. R. Swain, "A Note on Iliad 9.524-99: The Story of Meleager", *The Classical Quarterly* New Series, **38.2** (1988), pp. 271-276.
- [5] Strabo, referring to events of the Hunt, does remark "as the poet says" (*Geography* 10.3.6).
- [6] Xenophon, *Cynegetica* x provides some details of boar-hunting in reality; other classical sources related to boar hunting are assembled in J. Aymard, *Essai sur les chasses romaines* (Paris 1951) pp 297-329.
- [7] *Iliad* ix.933; the poet's concern is with Meleager's role in the battle begun over the boar's carcass, which embroiled Meleager and the Curetes, who were attacking his city of Calydon, rather than with the hunt itself, which he swiftly summarizes in a handful of lines.

- [8] The pelt remained a trophy at the temple of Tegea, which was enriched with prominent reliefs of the Calydonian Hunt, in which the Boar took the central place in the composition. The temple, however, was dedicated not to Artemis, but to that other Virgin Goddess, Athena Alea
- [9] Euripides, fragment 520, noted by Kerenyi p. 119 and note 673.
- [10] "He had honoured a stranger woman above them and set kinship aside", Diodorus Siculus noted.
- [11] A Greek fathom—*orgyia*—was the equivalent of six *podes* each of 29.6 centimeters; the circumference of the relic at its base was about 89 centimeters; a tusk that was over 29 centimeters through could only have been a mammoth tusk or that of one of the recently-extinct European Straight-tusked Elephants. Adrienne Mayor, in *The First Fossil Hunters: Paleontology In Greek and Roman Times*, has suggested that fossils like tusks of *Deinotherium* found in Greece helped generate myths of archaic giant beings.
- [12] Pausanias, *Description of Greece* viii.47.2.
- [13] Homer, *Iliad* ix.544.
- [14] Bacchylides, *Epinikia* 5.111.

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- Homer, *Iliad*, ix
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- Ruck, Carl A.P., and Danny Staples, 1994. *The World of Classical Myth* p 196
- Swinburne, Algernon Charles. "Atalanta in Calydon"

External links

- Theoi.com: Hus Kaydonios: (<http://www.theoi.com/Ther/HusKalydonios.html>) Literary quotes

Chimera

(not to be confused with Hemera, the Greek goddess of daytime)

The **Chimera** (also **Chimaera** or **Chimæra**) (♂ /kɪˈmɪərə/ or /kɑɪˈmɪərə/; Greek: Χίμαιρα, *Khimaira*, from χίμαρος, *khimaros*, "she-goat") was, according to Greek mythology, a monstrous fire-breathing female creature of Lycia in Asia Minor, composed of the parts of three animals: a lion, a serpent and a goat. Usually depicted as a lion, with the head of a goat arising from its back, and a tail that ended in a snake's head,^[1] the Chimera was one of the offspring of Typhon and Echidna and a sibling of such monsters as Cerberus and the Lernaean Hydra. The term chimera has also come to describe any mythical or fictional animal with parts taken from various animals.

Description

Homer's brief description in the *Iliad*^[2] is the earliest surviving literary reference: "a thing of immortal make, not human, lion-fronted and snake behind, a goat in the middle,^[3] and snorting out the breath of the terrible flame of bright fire".^[4] Elsewhere in the *Iliad*, Homer attributes the rearing of Chimera to Amisodorus.^[5] Hesiod's *Theogony* follows the Homeric description: he makes the Chimera the issue of Echidna: "*She was the mother of Chimaera who breathed raging fire, a creature fearful, great, swift-footed and strong, who had three heads, one of a grim-eyed lion; in her hinderpart, a dragon; and in her middle, a goat, breathing forth a fearful blast of blazing fire. Her did Pegasus and noble Bellerophon slay*"^[6] The author of the *Bibliotheca* concurs:^[7] descriptions agree that she breathed fire. The Chimera is generally considered to have been female (see the quotation from Hesiod above) despite the



The Chimera on a red-figure Apulian plate, ca 350–340 BC (Musée du Louvre)

mane adorning its lion's head, the inclusion of a close mane often was depicted on lionesses, but the ears always were visible (that does not occur with depictions of male lions). Sighting the Chimera was an omen of storms, shipwrecks, and natural disasters (particularly volcanoes).^[8]

While there are different genealogies, in one version the Chimera mated with her brother Orthrus and mothered the Sphinx and the Nemean lion (others have Orthrus and their mother, Echidna, mating; most attribute all to Typhon and Echidna).

The Chimera finally was defeated by Bellerophon, with the help of Pegasus, at the command of King Iobates of Lycia. Since Pegasus could fly, Bellerophon shot the Chimera from the air, safe from her heads and breath.^[9] A scholiast to Homer adds that he finished her off by equipping his spear with a lump of lead that melted when exposed to the Chimera's fiery breath and consequently killed her, an image drawn from metalworking.^[10]



"Chimera of Arezzo": an Etruscan bronze



Gold reel, possibly an ear-stud, with winged Pegasus (outer band) and the Chimera (inner band), Magna Graecia or Etruria, fourth century BC (Louvre)

The Chimera was situated in foreign Lycia,^[11] but her representation in the arts was wholly Greek.^[12] An autonomous tradition, one that did not rely on the written word, was represented in the visual repertory of the Greek vase-painters. The Chimera first appears at an early stage in the proto-Corinthian pottery-painters' repertory, providing some of the earliest identifiable mythological scenes that can be recognized in Greek art. The Corinthian type is fixed, after some early hesitation, in the 670s BC; the variations in the pictorial representations suggest to Marilyn Low Schmitt^[13] a multiple origin. The fascination with the monstrous devolved by the end of the seventh century into a decorative Chimera-motif in Corinth,^[14] while the motif of Bellerophon on Pegasus took on a separate existence alone. A separate Attic tradition, where the goats breathe fire and the animal's rear is serpent-like, begins with such confidence that Marilyn Low Schmitt^[15] is convinced there must be unrecognized earlier local prototypes. Two vase-painters employed the motif so consistently they are given the pseudonyms the

Bellerophon Painter and the Chimaera Painter. A fire-breathing lioness was one of the earliest of solar and war deities in Ancient Egypt (representations from 3000 years prior to the Greek) and influences are feasible.

In Etruscan civilization, the Chimera appears in the "Orientalizing" period that precedes Etruscan Archaic art; that is to say, very early indeed. The Chimera appears in Etruscan wall-paintings of the fourth century BC.

Robert Graves suggests,^[16] "The Chimera was, apparently, a calendar-symbol of the tripartite year, of which the seasonal emblems were lion, goat, and serpent."

In Medieval art, though the Chimera of Antiquity was forgotten, chimerical figures appear as embodiments of the deceptive, even Satanic forces of raw nature. Provided with a human face and a scaly tail, as in Dante's vision of Geryon in *Inferno* xvii.7–17, 25–27, hybrid monsters, more akin to the Manticore of Pliny's *Natural History* (viii.90), provided iconic representations of hypocrisy and fraud well into the seventeenth century, through an emblematic representation in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*.^[17]



Pebble mosaic depicting Bellerophon killing the Chimera, from Rhodes archaeological museum

Classical sources

The myths of the Chimera can be found in Pseudo-Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca* (book 1), Homer's *Iliad* (book 6); Hyginus' *Fabulae* 57 and 151; Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (book VI 339; IX 648); and Hesiod's *Theogony* 319ff.

Virgil, in the *Aeneid* (book 5) employs *Chimaera* for the name of Gyas' gigantic ship in the ship-race, with possible allegorical significance in contemporary Roman politics.^[18]

Hypothesis about origin

Pliny the Elder cited Ctesias and quoted Photius identifying the Chimera with an area of permanent gas vents which still can be found today by hikers on the Lycian Way in southwest Turkey. Called in Turkish *Yanartaş* (flaming rock), it consists of some two dozen vents in the ground, grouped in two patches on the hillside above the Temple of Hephaestus about 3 km north of Çıralı, near ancient Olympos, in Lycia. The vents emit burning methane thought to be of metamorphic origin, which in ancient times were landmarks by which sailors could navigate.

The Neo-Hittite Chimera from Carchemish, dated to 850–750 BC, which is now housed in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations^[19] no doubt served as a basis for the Greek legend. It differs from the Greek version in that while there are three heads, none of them is that of a goat, only a main human head, a lion's head facing forward and placed on the chest of the lion's body, and a snake's head placed at the end of the tail.



The eternal fires of Chimera in Lycia where the myth takes place

Use for Chinese mythological creatures

Some western scholars of Chinese art, starting with Victor Segalen, use the word "chimera" generically to refer to winged quadrupeds, such as *bixie*, *tianlu*, and even *qilin*.^[20]

Notes


- [1] Peck, "Chimaera" (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0062:entry=chimaera-harpers>).
- [2] Homer, *Iliad* 6.179–182 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0134:book=6:card=156>)
- [3] "The creature was a goat; a young goat that had seen but one winter was called *chimaira* in Greek". (Kerenyi 1959:82).
- [4] In Richmond Lattimore's translation.
- [5] Homer, *Iliad*, 16.328–329 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hom.+Il.+16.327>)
- [6] Hesiod *Theogony* 319–325 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hes.+Th.+319>) in Hugh Evelyn-White's translation.
- [7] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.3.1 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0022:text=Library:book=2:chapter=3:section=1>): "it had the fore part of a lion, the tail of a dragon, and its third head, the middle one, was rough too, which it belched fire. And it devastated the country and harried the cattle; for it was a single creature with the power of three beasts. It is said, too, that this Chimera was bred by Amisodarus, as Homer also affirms,³ and that it was begotten by Typhon on Echidna, as Hesiod relates".
- [8] Chimera Mythology (http://www.thegreekgods.org/Chimera_Mythology.htm)
- [9] Pindar: *Olympian Odes*, 13.84–90 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0162:book=O.:poem=13>); Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.3.2 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0022:text=Library:book=2:chapter=3:section=2>); Hesiod, *Theogony* 319 ff (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hes.+Th.+319>).
- [10] Graves, section 75, note
- [11] Homer, *Iliad* 16.328–329 (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hom.+Il.+16.327>), links her breeding to the Trojan ally Amisodarus of Lycia, as a plague for men.
- [12] Anne Roes "The Representation of the Chimaera" *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* **54.1** (1934), pp. 21–25, adduces Ancient Near Eastern conventions of winged animals whose wings end in animal heads.
- [13] This outline of Chimera motifs follows Marilyn Low Schmitt, "Bellerophon and the Chimaera in Archaic Greek Art" *American Journal of Archaeology* **70.4** (October 1966), pp. 341–347.
- [14] Later coins struck at Sicyon, near Corinth, bear the chimera-motif. (Schmitt 1966:344 note.
- [15] Schmitt 1966.
- [16] Graves 1960:sect.34.2.
- [17] John F. Moffitt, "An Exemplary Humanist Hybrid: Vasari's 'Fraude' with Reference to Bronzino's 'Sphinx'" *Renaissance Quarterly* **49.2** (Summer 1996), pp. 303–333, traces the chimeric image of Fraud backwards from Bronzino.
- [18] W.S.M. Nicoll, "Chasing Chimaeras" *The Classical Quarterly New Series*, **35.1** (1985), pp. 134–139.
- [19] fr:Fichier:Museum of Anatolian Civilizations080.jpg
- [20] Barry Till (1980), "Some Observations on Stone Winged Chimeras at Ancient Chinese Tomb Sites", *Artibus Asiae* **42** (4): 261–281, JSTOR 3250032

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Pegasus

Pegasus



Bellerophon riding Pegasus (1914)

Parents	Poseidon and Medusa
Siblings	Chrysaor
Mount	Mt. Olympus

Pegasus (Ancient Greek: Πήγασος, *Pégasos*, Latin *Pegasus*) is one of the best known mythological creatures in Greek mythology. He is a winged divine horse, usually depicted as white in colour. He was sired by Poseidon, in his role as horse-god, and foaled by the Gorgon Medusa.^[1] He was the brother of Chrysaor, born at a single birthing when his mother was decapitated by Perseus. Greco-Roman poets write about his ascent to heaven after his birth and his obeisance to Zeus, king of the gods, who instructed him to bring lightning and thunder from Olympus. Friend of the Muses, Pegasus is the creator of Hippocrene, the fountain on Mt. Helicon. He was captured by the Greek hero Bellerophon near the fountain Peirene with the help of Athena and Poseidon. Pegasus allows the hero to ride him to defeat a monster, the Chimera, before realizing many other exploits. His rider, however, falls off his back trying to reach Mount Olympus. Zeus transformed him into the constellation Pegasus and placed him up in the sky.

Hypotheses have been proposed regarding its relationship with the Muses, the gods Athena, Poseidon, Zeus, Apollo, and the hero Perseus.

The symbolism of Pegasus varies with time. Symbol of wisdom and especially of fame from the Middle Ages until the Renaissance, he became one symbol of the poetry and the creator of sources in which the poets come to draw inspiration, particularly in the 19th century. Pegasus is the subject of a very rich iconography, especially through the ancient Greek pottery and paintings and sculptures of the Renaissance. Personification of the water, solar myth, or shaman mount, Carl Jung and his followers have seen in Pegasus a profound symbolic esoteric in relation to the spiritual energy that allows to access to the realm of the gods on Mount Olympus.

In the 20th and 21st century, he appeared in movies, in fantasy, in video games and in role play, where by extension, the term "pegasus" (plural: "pegasi") is often used to refer to any winged horse.

Etymology

The poet Hesiod connects the name *Pegasus* with the word for "spring, well", *pēgē*: "the *pegai* of Okeanos, where he was born."^[2]

A proposed etymology of the name is Luwian *pihassas*, meaning "lightning", and *Pihassassi*, a local Luwian-Hittite name in southern Cilicia of a weather god represented with thunder and lightning. The proponents of this etymology adduce Pegasus' role, reported as early as Hesiod, as bringer of thunderbolts to Zeus.^[3] Fox (2009) criticizes this suggestion, saying that the connection of Pegasus with lightning bolts may be secondary, based on the "like-sounding name" of the Luwian god.^[4]

Pegasus and springs

According to legend, everywhere the winged horse struck his hoof to the earth, an inspiring spring burst forth. One of these springs was upon the Muses' Mount Helicon, the *Hippocrene* ("horse spring"),^[5] opened, Antoninus Liberalis suggested,^[6] at the behest of Poseidon to prevent the mountain swelling with rapture at the song of the Muses; another was at Troezen.^[7] Hesiod relates how Pegasus was peacefully drinking from a spring when the hero Bellerophon captured him. Hesiod also says Pegasus carried thunderbolts for Zeus.

Birth

There are several versions of the birth of the winged stallion and his brother Chrysaor in the far distant place at the edge of Earth, Hesiod's "springs of Oceanus, which encircles the inhabited earth, where Perseus found Medusa:

One is that they sprang from the blood issuing from Medusa's neck as Perseus was beheading her,^[8] similar to the manner in which Athena was born from the head of Zeus. In another version, when Perseus beheaded Medusa, they were born of the Earth, fed by the Gorgon's blood. A variation of this story holds that they were formed from the mingling of Medusa's blood, Pain and sea foam, implying that Poseidon had involvement in their making. The last version bears resemblance to the birth of Aphrodite.



Pegasus, as the horse of Muses, was put on the roof of Poznań Opera House (Max Littmann, 1910)

Pedigree of Pegasus

Sire Poseidon	Cronus	Uranus	Gaia or Nyx
			Gaia or Nyx
		Gaia	Chaos
			Chaos
	Rhea	Uranus	Gaia or Nyx
			Gaia or Nyx
		Gaia	Chaos
			Chaos
Dam Medusa	Phorcys	Pontus	Ether or Uranus
			Gaia
		Gaia	Chaos
			Chaos
	Ceto	Pontus	Ether or Uranus
			Gaia
		Gaia	Chaos
			Chaos

Bellerophon

Pegasus aided the hero Bellerophon in his fight against both the Chimera and the Amazons. There are varying tales as to how Bellerophon found Pegasus; the most common^[9] says that the hero was told by Polyeidon to sleep in the temple of Athena, where the goddess visited him in the night and presented him with a golden bridle. The next morning, still clutching the bridle, he found Pegasus drinking at the Pierian spring

Perseus



Parthian era bronze plate depicting Pegasus ("Pegaz" in Persian), excavated in Masjed Soleyman, Khūzestān, Iran.

Michaud's *Biographie universelle* relates that when Pegasus was born, he flew to where thunder and lightning is released. Then, according to certain versions of the myth, Athena tamed him and gave him to Perseus, who flew to Ethiopia to help Andromeda.^[10]

In fact Pegasus is a late addition to the story of Perseus, who flew on his own with the sandals loaned him by Hermes.

Olympus

Pegasus and Athena left Bellerophon and continued to Olympus where he was stabled with Zeus' other steeds, and was given the task of

carrying Zeus' thunderbolts. Because of his faithful service to Zeus, he was honored with transformation into a constellation.^[11] On the day of his *catasterism*, when Zeus transformed him into a constellation, a single feather fell to the earth near the city of Tarsus.^[12]

Legacy

World War II

During World War II, the silhouetted image of Bellerophon the warrior, mounted on the winged Pegasus, was adopted by the United Kingdom's newly-raised parachute troops in 1941 as their upper sleeve insignia. The image clearly symbolized a warrior arriving at a battle by air, the same tactics used by paratroopers. The square upper-sleeve insignia comprised Bellerophon/Pegasus in light blue on a maroon background. The insignia was designed by famous English novelist Daphne du Maurier, who was married to the commander of the 1st Airborne Division (and later the expanded British Airborne Forces), General Frederick "Boy" Browning. *According to The British Army Website, the insignia was designed by Major Edward Seago in May, 1942.* The maroon background on the insignia was later used again by the Airborne Forces when they adopted the famous maroon beret in Summer 1942. The beret was the origin of the German nickname for British airborne troops, The Red Devils. Today's Parachute Regiment carries on the maroon beret tradition.

During the airborne phase of the Normandy invasion on the night of 5–6 June 1944, British 6th Airborne Division captured all its key objectives in advance of the seaborne assault, including the capture and holding at all costs of a vital bridge over the Caen Canal, near Ouistreham. In memory of their tenacity, the bridge has been known ever since as Pegasus Bridge.



The emblem of the World War II, British Airborne Forces, Bellerophon riding the flying horse Pegasus.

Popular culture

The winged horse that has provided an instantly recognizable corporate logo or emblem of inspiration.

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- [1] Medusa, in her archaic centaur-like form. He appears in the incised relief on a mid-7th century BCE vase from Boeotia at the Louvre (CA795), illustrated in John Boardman, Jasper Griffin and Oswyn Murray, *Greece and the Hellenistic World* (Oxford University Press) 1988, fig p 87.
- [2] Noted by Karl Kerényi, *The Heroes of the Greeks*, 1959:80: "In the name Pegasos itself the connection with a spring, *pege*, is expressed."
- [3] The connection of *Pegasus* with *Pihassas* was suggested by H.T. Bossert, "Die phönikisch-hethitischen Bilinguen vom Karatepe", *Jahrbuch für kleinasiatische Forschung*, 2 1952/53:333, P. Frei, "Die Bellerophonessaga und das Alte Testament", in B. Janowski, K. Koch and G. Wilhelm, eds., *Religionsgeschichtliche Beziehungen zwischen Kleinasien, Nordsyrien und der Alte Testament*, 1993:48f, and Hutter, "Der luwische Wettergott *pihašsaši* under der griechischen Pegasos", in Chr. Zinko, ed. *Studia Onomastica et Indogermanica...* 1995:79-98, all noted in Robin Lane Fox, *Travelling Heroes in the Epic Age of Homer*, 2009:207f.
- [4] "a storm god is not the origin of a horse. However, he had a like-sounding name, and Greek visitors to Cilicia may have connected their existing Pegasus with Zeus's lightning after hearing about this 'Pihassassi' and his functions and assuming, wrongly, he was their own Pegasus in a foreign land." Fox 2009:208.
- [5] Pausanias, 9. 31. 3.
- [6] Antoninus Liberalis, *Metamorphoses* 9
- [7] Pausanias, 2. 31. 9.
- [8] Hesiod, *Theogony* 281; Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliothèque* 2. 42, et al. Harris, Stephen L. and Gloria Platzner. *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights*. 2nd ed. (New York: Mayfield Publishing), 1998. 234.
- [9] For example in Pindar, *Olympian Ode* 13.
- [10] Michaud, Joseph F. & Michaud, Louis G. (1833). Michaud Frères. ed (in French). *Biographie universelle, ancienne et moderne, ou Histoire, par ordre alphabétique, de la vie publique et privée de tous les hommes qui se sont fait remarquer par leurs écrits, leurs actions, leurs talents, leurs vertus ou leurs crimes* (<http://books.google.com/?id=HGRIAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA284&dq=PÃ©gase>). 5. . Retrieved 23 June 2009
- [11] Aratus, *Phaenomena* 206; Scott Littleton, *Mythology. The Illustrated Anthology of World Myth & Storytelling* London: Duncan Baird, 2002:147. ISBN 1-903296-37-4
- [12] Grimal, Pierre (4 September 1996). Trans. by A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop. ed. *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. p. 349. ISBN 978-0-631-20102-1.

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